

WILSON
OF THE
MOUNTED

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SANDFORD

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Lionel E. Handford

Nov. 16, 1925.

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*This book is dedicated
in loving respect to
MY MOTHER*

FOREWORD

My first recollections of the Mounted Police date back to when I was a little tad. They seem to come into my memory through a fog—plain in the foreground and fading off into nothingness in the mists of childhood memories of the past—for I was raised in their midst and remember when not a fence broke the broad sweep of the prairies. In reminiscences I can see the plains shimmering under the heat of the summer sun, unbroken by neither farm or human habitation for miles. Where I lived no plow share had broken their virgin soil and, unhampered, the cowboys drove their cattle over that mighty grazing grounds in the shade of the Rockies. The Red Man roamed at will and under the night blanket you could hear the lonely howl of the coyotes, just outside in the back yard, the yard being indicated by a sweep of the hand which you could take to mean your immediate surroundings, or to include the plains that stretched away to the horizon. *And that was not so very long ago!*

I was seventeen when I wrote this story. As I write this Foreword here in Pennsylvania my mind travels back over the miles to my dear old Alberta home and I shall here set forth the conditions under which I wrote:

Dad was indulging in the cattle game at the time and I was "cowpuncher" for him that winter. The cattle corrals were situated on a hill, about two miles north of my home, which was in a valley. In the early morning I would tie my rifle to the saddle, call Carlo, my dog, "fork" old Bill, my cow pony, and with Carlo leading the way through the snowdrifts we would travel the distance with hoar-frost forming around the horse's nostrils and over his shoulders.

After turning the cattle loose so that they could go down to the lake in the valley to drink from the holes which I had cut in the ice on the way over, I would "run" a team in off the range, hitch them to the hay rack and go get a load of feed. By the time the feed was scattered around the corrals the cattle were back. After turning the team loose again, Carlo and I would go up to the house, light a fire in the stove, thaw out the ink which had frozen in my fountain pen and set the ink bottle on the stove to bring the contents back to their proper liquid form, then, with Carlo at my feet, I would sit at the table and write.

In front of me was a window through which I could see my home away below in the valley, just beyond the lake. Beyond the old house beside the railroad, the hills stretched away towards the cut banks of the Bow River, which seemed to hang in the landscape fifteen miles away, just at the brim of the horizon,—a mighty expanse covered with a white mantle of snow. Several barb wire fences enclosed the buildings and corrals. These I could see through the window. Behind me was the north window through which could be seen nothing but prairie stretching away into infinity, snow-covered, majestic.

At noon Carlo and I would have our dinner after which he would resume his sleep at my feet and I would continue with my writing. Some times during the day I would get a stray shot at a coyote and often I was able to get a jack rabbit to feed to several hungry cats that had taken up their residence in the barn, making their bunks in the hay loft. At four o'clock the corrals were closed and the place left for the night.

It took from November till February to complete the story, after which in 1922 it ran successfully as a serial in magazine form. Since that time the corrals have gone from the hilltop; the house in which the story

took form has been moved to the valley and the barb wire fences have been taken away. The hilltop is bare. Old Bill, the cow pony, was getting old at that time and has now received his pension. Carlo, my dog, picked up a poison bait and has passed on. The name, Royal Northwest Mounted Police has been changed to "The Royal Canadian Mounted" and even this story, as it appears herein, has changed slightly from the original.

On page 24 a small change will be noted. The original stated that Wilson reached the Bow River. At the time of writing the story, I was not so thoroughly acquainted with the country as I am now and at that time I was sure that the Bow River flowed through the prairie city of Medicine Hat. But the Bow joins the South Saskatchewan some miles west of where Wilson is supposed, fictionally, to have reached the river. The change was made so that it would not confuse the reader and probably cause an argument, which, if the book were used for a proof, would be wrong.

Probably, in places, the distances are not exact, due, no doubt, to the fact that at the time of writing, I thought they were in proper relation to the places mentioned. But if they do deviate from reality, the deviations are so slight that it was thought no change would be necessary. However, all other instances, such as the Riel Rebellion and any historical data referred to, is an exact portrayal of what happened in the early days of the coming of western civilization.

Many thanks are due those who have assisted me in the preparation of this book, the small illustrations being supplied by the courtesy of The Express Publishing Co., but the hat and gun ornament appearing at the end of the book was drawn by my chum, Cleon M. Pross, of Toledo, Ohio, after the magazine original by Harry R. Grissinger.

The frontispiece was drawn specially for this work

by E. I. Zook and the full page illustration appearing in the body of the book was also drawn by the same artist, but is a copy after the magazine original by Harry R. Grissinger.

If, while pursuing the contents of this book, my readers receive a few carefree hours in the world of imagination where everything is possible, and, if the afterthoughts are pleasant memories of the world from which you will have just awakened, then, if this book accomplishes that pleasantness for you, my work will not have been in vain.

LIONEL E. SANDFORD.

LITITZ, PENNSYLVANIA.

1925.



STARLIGHT'S WHITE TAIL STREAMED OUT LIKE A COMET—WILSON'S .45 FLASHED UNDER THE SLOWLY RISING MOON.—Page 65.

Frontispiece.

WILSON OF THE MOUNTED

By

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CHAPTER I.



CROSS Canada the great transcontinental railroad had pushed its way and was now entering the Gap. With the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway came the opening of the Great West, and the Indians saw the buffalo disappearing from the prairies.

One night at the railroad camp at the Gap a half-breed got into a quarrel and drew his gun. Within an hour the Royal Northwest Mounted Police were riding the plains in search of the murderer of the construction foreman at the Gap.

IT WAS a bright sunlight day in early June, 1884. A boy of about nineteen summers sat on the back steps of an old log cabin. He looked strong and muscular, but he wore a down-hearted look, a look that seemed to say the whole world was against him. He held his chin in his hands and braced his elbows on his knees. His head was bare, except for the long, greasy black hair that fell over his temples.

The savory smell of fried steak and onions came from the kitchen door. At its call the boy arose, entered the house and sat down at the table. His mother joined him and they ate in silence.

Suddenly he raised his head. "Mother," he said, "I'm going to ride Starlight."

A look of dismay came over his mother's face.

"Oh, Willie!" she cried, "you promised me you'd never ride him. If you do, you'll be thrown and killed. Please, Willie, don't."

"Oh, I'll be all right, mother," he answered. "I just overheard dad tell you last night that Starlight was no good, so he was going to sell him. Now, you know that Mr. McDonald gave him to me when he was a little colt. I've taken care of him for three years. You know he's mine, and dad has no right to sell him. Dad will just take the money and buy whisky with it. Now, I've made up my mind that I've stood enough from dad. He's made up his mind to sell that horse and I've made up my mind that he won't! He'll never be sold to buy whisky for dad."

His mother pleaded, but to no avail. He had made up his mind, so after dinner he called to a big, fleet-footed black stallion that was feeding in the fields. The stallion raised his head and whinnied. Young Wilson called him again and the noble horse responded. After a little coaxing he managed to get the halter on. He led him into the corral and then fought with him to get the bridle on. Never before had he had such a cold, hard piece of steel forced between his jaws. He resented it and fought to gain his liberty, but Wilson was firm and resolved to conquer.

THE great stallion was wild and untamed. Only his master, William Wilson, could approach him. He was an uncommon horse and Wilson loved him. His tail and mane were white as snow, while his body was a glossy coal black. He had two beautiful black eyes that seemed to sparkle with fire. A beautiful white star adorned his forehead and the sun shone and glistened on his proudly arched neck. Ever since Wilson had first fed him he had come at his call, but he would

never allow anything more than a halter to adorn his person.

Wilson strapped a blind across his eyes and threw the saddle on. Starlight immediately threw it off again. Wilson picked it up and throwing it on again, he caught the cinch and buckled it. Starlight reared as Wilson drew the drawstrap and the cinch was tight. After he quieted down Wilson drew the rear cinch tight and the saddle was on. He swung into the saddle and threw off the blinds. Starlight rose straight into the air.

Wilson swayed, gained a lost hold and clung for life. Then the spirit of the fight entered him and with a wild yell he brought his big felt hat down over his head and fanned the stallion's ears. In vain the horse tried to get rid of his tormenter. He reared and bucked and fought. Wilson still clung to his seat. It seemed as if nothing could pry his knees loose, though the sweat poured from his forehead and the dust nearly blinded him. At last the great stallion was white with foam and his swollen muscles stood out like a map of rivers. Then he gave his last plunge and stood conquered. All afternoon Wilson rode him, and when night came he was tired, but happy. He knew he had gained a friend—a friend that would carry him through thick and thin. A friend that would never desert him.

THE sun rose over a field of glory. The birds sang in the treetops and the crickets chirped for the sheer joy of living. Mrs. Wilson arose and looked about, mystified. The fire wasn't lit, the cows weren't milked and the happy whistle of William's unending joy was nowhere to be heard. She went to his bedroom and found a note pinned to his pillow. With trembling fingers she picked it up and read:

Dear Mother:

I am leaving home to join the Mounted Police. I needed a good horse, so I took Starlight. You will be all right, as I have got Chuck Walters to take care of the farm for you. I will see that Chuck gets paid. Tell dad that I'll never return until he swears off drink and acknowledges that Starlight is mine. Don't worry about me, as I will be all right, and just as soon as dad comes to my terms I'll return. Good-bye. Your son,

WILLIAM

The note dropped from her fingers and she fell on the bed and cried. Her husband was a drunkard. Her son had left her and now she was alone. Drink, that curse of the world, had brought it all.



CHAPTER II.



UPERINTENDENT Bridon of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police at Winnipeg looked up from a report he was reading. A broad smile spread over his face as he looked out the window.

"Looks 'as if all cowpunchers don't ride ten-cent horses," he remarked to Corporal Young.

"Why?" asked the corporal.

"Well," the Superintendent answered, "cowboys generally have a twenty-dollar hat, a fifty-dollar pair of chaps, a hundred-dollar saddle and about fifty dollars in fancy jewelry and a ten-cent horse. But yonder puncher's got a horse I'd give a hundred dollars for any day."

The Corporal looked out the window and exclaimed, "A hundred dollars! I'd give a hundred and fifty for that cayuse."

"Cayuce!" the Superintendent cried. "Man, that's no cayuse! It's a real horse if ever there was one. It's one out of the ordinary. I've seen horses, but I've never seen one that you couldn't tell where the colors faded into one another. But, believe me, that's one out there. Man! Look at the glossy black coat and——"

"He's coming in!" the Corporal exclaimed. "See?"

The cowboy dismounted, tied his splendid mount to the hitching-post and strode into the office. It was

Wilson.

"What can I do for you?" asked the Superintendent.

"I want to join the Mounted Police. I would like to go West. Out to the foot of the Rockies. I don't want to stay in the East if I can help it," came the swift reply.

The Superintendent looked him over and then said, "You look young. What is your age?"

"I'm twenty-one," Wilson lied.

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Any one depending on you?"

"No, I'm free and footloose. All I got is my horse and I wouldn't part with him. He's the only one I'm bound to."

"I see," smiled the Superintendent. "Well, under ordinary circumstances we would turn you down, but I believe you can make good. We have only five hundred police to keep the West in check. It seems as if something is brewing out there and we need men—we need them bad, too. But we want men who are strong, brave and dependable. They must always tell the truth, be afraid of nothing, do as they are told and be loyal to their country. They must control their tongues and keep their tempers down. They must not be afraid of death, and, last of all, and above all, they must not touch liquor, unless it be as a medicine. Do you measure up to that standard?"

AND Wilson spoke the truth when he said "yes" but a deep blush spread over his cheeks as he thought of his age.

The Superintendent looked out the window and his eyes rested on the stallion. He turned to Wilson. "I guess you're right," he said. "It'd take a brave man to ride the mount you got out there. Now I want to know, can you shoot?"

For answer Wilson pulled a wicked-looking six-shooter from its holster and proceeded to kill the flies, of which there were a large number climbing around on the walls.

"Here! here!" cried the Superintendent, "I didn't want you to demonstrate. I wanted you to answer my question."

"Well, didn't I?" Wilson asked.

"Here, Corporal," the Superintendent said in somewhat agitated tones, "take this young buck into the store-room and hoist those chaps off him and give him some decent clothes, then send him in to take the pledge."

Wilson soon returned, fitted out in a red coat and a plainsman's hat. His blue pants had a yellow stripe down each side and the legs were neatly tucked into a pair of long riding boots. A big cartridge belt was strapped over his shoulder and it was filled with .45 caliber cartridges, and at his hips swung two big six-shooters. The only thing that was missing was his spurs. These he wouldn't put on because, he said, "as long as I own that horse he'll never feel the goad of a spur." So the corporal did not force him.

Then he took the pledge. He never thought, as he ended with the words, "So God help me," that he would in a very short time to come, need the help of God.

Then the Superintendent handed him a bulky envelope with no address on and told him to take it to the wigwam of Little Beaver on the Assiniboine Indian Reserve, about sixty miles west of there. Wilson turned

to leave, but the Superintendent called him back.

"By the way," he said, "If you happen to meet Jean Laceau, I want you to get him by all means. Although it isn't our policy to kill, sometimes we're forced to, and if you have to shoot him you've got my orders, and that is, 'shoot to kill.'"

"Who's Jean Laceau?" Wilson asked.

"Jean Laceau!" the Superintendent exclaimed. "Don't you know him? Here, this is his picture; look at it well," and the Superintendent handed him a photo of a cunning-looking half-breed.

A SUPPRESSED cry escaped Wilson's lips as he took the photo. A sudden blaze of hatred came into his keen, dark-brown eyes. His fists clinched together until the knuckles turned white.

"Jean Laceau!" he cried. "If that isn't John Lathrope my name isn't Wilson! What has he done to be shot?"

"Where do you come from that you don't know Jean's history?" questioned the Superintendent. "I thought the whole Dominion of Canada knew about it."

"I started out from Kingston, Ontario, about a month ago, to come here to join the police and I little thought that my first orders would be to shoot John Lathrope, or as you call him, Jean Laceau. I know a little of his history, as well as you, and again I ask: "What has he done to be shot?"

The Superintendent looked Wilson straight in the face and asked in a somewhat angry tone, "What do you know about that breed?"

"Superintendent Bridon," he answered, "I don't think it would be wise to tell you what I know. It is

an incident connected with my family and it happened long before the Mounted Police were formed. If it wasn't for that breed I wouldn't be here now. You've got my word, that if ever I meet him I'll do my best to get him. But I want to know what I'm killing the fellow for, if I've got to shoot. Now will you answer my question?"

The Superintendent looked at the floor and thought, then he said: "I guess I thoroughly understand you now. I wouldn't want to kill a man myself if I didn't know what I was killing him for. So I'll just tell you a little of Laceau's history, the part that you have failed to find out yourself.

"Last March there was a poker game in full swing at the railway construction camp under McKinnon at the Gap. That is where the Bow River leaves the Rocky Mountains and flows out across the prairie to join the South Saskatchewan, while the Canadian Pacific Railway enters the Rockies at the same place to cross the mountains to reach the Pacific. Now, you know where it happened. Well, Jean Laceau was one of the main characters in this game.

"One night there was a row over a fellow who was accused of cheating. The foreman came upon the scene and tried to stop the fight and the hot-headed breed tackled him. But the breed got the worst of the fight. Well, it turned out that the foreman laid the breed flat and then the breed drew his gun. Next day McKinnon was laid under the sod and Jean was fighting shy of the Mounted Police.

"We watched for him and he turned up in Calgary. He shot the man that captured him and got away. Then he turned up in Duck Lake and wounded another policeman and got away. About a week ago we got a line

on him in the Assiniboine Reserve and we think he is still around here. Now, we are taking no chances. We want him, dead or alive. At the first sign of escape I want you to down him. If he doesn't go down, you will. You know him as well as I do, so I'll not say any more. Now go," and Wilson went.

As HE approached his horse he was thinking about the half-breed, Laceau, instead of Starlight's high spirits. But as he swung into the saddle the red flash of his coat made his horse snort, and before Wilson knew where he was, he found himself rising from the sidewalk with a good-sized lump on his head that hadn't been there when he swung into the saddle. He looked around at the grinning spectators and then at Starlight, who was just going round the corner in a cloud of dust. Then he said, "Well, Starlight, old boy, I didn't think you could do it. I've got to take my hat off to you!" Then he set out after the fleeing stallion.

As he rounded the corner he saw a well-aimed lariat fall over his horse's head. Then the big stallion turned and charged the cowboy who threw the rope. Wilson arrived just as the cowboy swung free of the saddle and his little cayuse went down under the charge of that great bulwark of flesh and bone. Wilson rushed into the fray and caught the lines. At Wilson's stern command the big horse stopped and Wilson soon had him quieted. Then he turned to the young fellow who threw the rope.

"Is your horse hurt?" he asked.

"No, just a little frightened, that's all."

"I sure thought he'd downed him for good. Thanks very much for your slick piece of work. Here's a fivespot."

"Stick that kale in yer jeans and keep it there," cried the indignant cowboy. "Any man that's got gall enough to climb that horse ought to be out West bustin' brones. I'll just bet you can't climb him again without blinders."

Wilson turned and threw the off line over Starlight's head, placed his foot in the stirrup, swung lightly into the saddle, bid the cowboy good-bye and turned up the road and jogged off at a slow canter.

The cowboy scratched his head, looked at the red-coated horseman, then without a word he swung into the saddle and coiled his rope up as he rode away.

That night Wilson slept under the stars. As he lay there with his saddle for a pillow and a couple of blankets thrown over him, with old Mother Earth for his bed, his mind traveled back over his experiences since he had left home.

He thought of his mother and wondered how she was. Then he remembered that Chuck had promised faithfully to take care of the farm. He knew she would be all right as long as his chum stayed on the farm. Then he wondered how long it would be before he returned home. Then he thought of the Superintendent's words, "Shoot to kill!" He wondered how he could draw his gun on the breed. But he belonged to the Mounted Police now and he had to obey orders. Then he wished that he could only get his hands on the breed and make him confess what he, Wilson, wanted most to know. As he thought of the half-breed his heart turned to stone and he knew that he could obey orders, but then, when he thought of the breed's secret he made up his mind that he would capture the breed alive, no matter what the cost. But he little knew that that resolve before many hours would take him over half

a continent.

AT LAST, with a heavy sigh, he turned over and his eyes closed in sleep. Next morning he arose at sunrise and called his horse. The big stallion had learned to come and stand while the saddle was put on. Then Wilson swung into the saddle and they were away. About noon he found Sergeant Anderson and delivered his message. Late that night he rode into Portage la Prairie, and after seeing to his horse he walked into the hotel to get a bed for the night.

In the waiting-room he encountered two Mounted Police who had just come in from the far North. They were on their way home on a short leave of absence. Wilson soon made friends and then they told him many tales of the far North. During the course of the evening they began to discuss the trouble that Jean Laceau had made.

The taller of the two declared that if ever he had a chance at him Jean would never have time to draw his gun.

"What makes you so bloodthirsty?" Wilson queried.

"He shot my brother in Fort Calgary and I've made a vow that if ever I get a chance I'll get revenge," he declared.

"Don't do anything rash," Wilson continued.

"Why doesn't Bridon send out a special patrol for him? It'd be a lot quicker than just waiting until he turned up," remarked the other.

"Men's too scarce," replied the tall one. "They need more men out West now. I had an awful time getting away this time. The breeds up on the Saskatchewan are going to make trouble. The Western Indians might rise and help them, too. Of course, the breeds

have a right to holler, but they ought not rebel. It won't do them any good. Louis Riel is expected to return to help them. As soon as he gets on the scene, believe me, now, there's going to be something doing out there. Lacey is a great friend of the Indian and he will champion the cause of the half-breeds and then the West goes up in smoke."

"What's the trouble with the breeds, anyway?" Wilson asked.

"Well, it's like this," was the reply. "Those half-breeds are the forerunners of civilization in the West. They have undertaken the old French plan of having all their farms confront the river. Their farms are all narrow, to allow the houses to come close together along the river front. The land is their's because they settled there and they are pioneers of the West. Why shouldn't the Government issue title deeds for their land? The Government won't do it. Instead they are sending surveyors out there to divide the land up into townships and each farm will then be square. As soon as that's done speculators will rush in and buy the land. The breeds have no title deeds, so, bluey, away goes their land. Why shouldn't they holler?"

"They've got all the right to in the world," Wilson answered.

"You bet they have," the tall police declared, "And they're going to make use of that right, too!"

"What's the matter with the Force? Can't they hold them down?" Wilson asked.

"The Force!" echoed the tall police. "Why, man, there's five hundred police in the Force. These five hundred men are placed in small groups over an area of three hundred thousand square miles. That gives six hundred square miles for one police to control.

Now, over this same area we have about twelve thousand Indians, besides the half-breeds along the Saskatchewan. In the Calgary territory we have five reserves. There is the Sarcee Reserve, just a few miles southwest of Calgary; the Stonies, at the Gap, and the Piegans and Bloods, near Fort Macleod. Then we have the great Blackfeet Confederacy, south of Gleichen. All these reserves are close together. These reserves can come together and exterminate every white man from Medicine Hat to the Rockies. Then the breeds along the Saskatchewan do their bit in the North and the whole of Western Canada will have to be resettled. It's a big scheme and it's liable to go through if the Government doesn't step in and issue those title deeds——"

"What's that?" interrupted the tall policeman's companion.

Suddenly every man reached for his revolver. They sat motionless, with strained ears, listening to the words coming down the hall.

"I shoot you down like I shoot McKinnon at de Gap, by Gar!" came a high-pitched voice. "You cheet dat night and get me into trouble wid de police. Now, by Gar, I shoot you like I shoot McKinnon!"

Then a loud report echoed and re-echoed throughout the building.

With a shout of "Laceau!" the tall police leaped to his feet. Wilson tried to hold him back, but revenge burned within him and he threw Wilson off and dashed down the hall. At his heels came his companion. Wilson

sprang to his feet, his heart burning with rage at the way he had been handled. He must save Laceau's life or his own chance to gain what Laceau alone knew was gone. So down the hall he dashed after the excited, revenge-maddened police.

THE police threw wide open the door from which the sound came. But the breed was waiting for such a move, for, as the door swung on its hinges a second shot rang out and the tall police dropped—dead.

The second police threw himself out of range, but Wilson quickly stepped into plain view, dropped to the floor and fired. The half-breed's gun flew out of his hand and spun across the floor. Then Wilson rose to his feet and the breed found himself looking down the little black muzzle of Wilson's revolver, from which a little curl of smoke was rising from the previous shot. So quick was it done, the breed hadn't time to shoot the third shot.

A sickly smile spread across the breed's face. He looked across the table at Wilson and said, "Well, by Gar, you got me good dis time! What you say?"

"Yes, John Lathrope, or, in other words, Jean Laceau, I've got you good. Now I'll make you pay for all the sorrow you've caused the Wilson family. First of all, I want to know where——"

"*Wilson!*" cried the horror-struck breed. With a cry he dropped to the floor, behind the table. Wilson dropped to cover him, but as he dropped the breed leap-

ed to his feet and sprang through the open window behind him. Wilson sprang over the table and leaned out the window, but too late. The breed was gone!

Then Wilson turned to the other four men who were in the room. "Well, boys," he said, "your friend has gone, but I see he has left his gun. Do you suppose he will come back for it?"

"I reckon not," answered one of the four. "You're a little too quick for him. Now what are you going to do with us?"

"What were you doing in here with that breed?" Wilson came straight to the point.

"Just havn' a friendly game."

"Friendly!" Wilson cried. "Don't try to make me laugh. It sure doesn't look friendly for your pard there. What's that breed's business down East here, anyway? Why didn't he stay out West?"

"He settled his business here tonight. By this time he's headed West again."

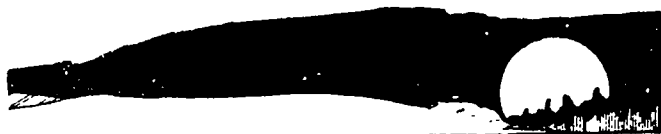
"So the critter followed that fellow back here to get revenge! Why didn't you let him know what the breed's intentions were?"

"The breed invited me and my friends in here to have a little game and that fellow was with him. We didn't know that he was the fellow that Laceau was after. All that I knew was that the breed was after a man. He told me that much the other day. Him and I were partners at the Gap, but I left before the breed shot McKinnon. It wasn't my fault that he shot that

fellow here tonight. If I got the breed for you it would be taking the law out of your hands, and if I had to shoot him you'd hang me for murder."

"All right," Wilson replied. "You say the breed's gone West. Now I'll just take you along to Winnipeg so that you can give the Superintendent a little information."

Then he turned to the other police and said: "Well, you see what it has cost us tonight. We lost our heads. There's your partner, there. He lost his head and it cost him his life. When Jean dropped under the table I should have kept my head and stood up and not played peek-a-boo with him. You must have lost your head or you'd have prevented his escape. Well, experience is a dear teacher. From now on we've got to remember to keep our heads."



CHAPTER III.



WILSON, why did you disobey my orders?" It was the Superintendent speaking.

"Well," Wilson replied, "I thought I had him and I don't want to shoot him unless I have to."

"If he had the chance, he'd kill you."

"Don't worry. I'll never give him the chance."

"I guess Providence will see to that, Wilson," the Superintendent replied. "I heard all about your exploits the other night and now I know I've found the man I want. We can't allow Jean to carry on like this. We've got to get him, and you're the man that's going to do the job!"

"Me!" Wilson cried. "Why me?"

Because you showed us that you're not afraid of Jean. Something has happened that will make you get him. When a man brings sorrow to a family and one of the family sets out to get revenge, that fellow is going to get revenge. That is why I depend on you. Jean is delivered into your hands. You are young, but I know that you can handle the job. But, remember, don't underrate the power of your enemy. Your trail lies to the west. Now go!"

Wilson walked slowly from the room. He stood by Starlight and gazed at the ground. He could barely believe it. "'West!'" he muttered. "'Your trail lies to the west. Now go!'" Suddenly, as if driven by

those words he swung himself into the saddle and headed straight into the setting sun.

Down along the muddy Assiniboine River he rode. Under the overhanging bushes and trees, climbing over hills, taking shortcuts, onward he rode. The sun sank low in the west, seemed to hang for a minute and then dropped out of sight. All was stillness; not a living creature seemed to stir. Then twilight passed away and the moon sent its cool, soft rays of limpid light down to cheer him on his way. Then again he came out on the river's level. He saw the muddy waters moving along on their never-ending course. In places they moved steady, then faster, then again they would slow up, swing around a bend, swish past great rocks and ever onward into Lake Winnipeg and thence to Hudson Bay.

At last he halted for the night and as he lay on his hard bed he thought of his great task. He began to dream of how he would get Jean. Then he would go home, bring them the joyful news, and they would be happy. He thought of the possibilities of the half-breed not having good news when it was told. Then he thought of how easy the half-breed had fooled him. "But," he muttered, "I'll show them yet!" And, still thinking, he went to sleep.

NEXT morning he saddled Starlight and rode on. Day after day passed by. Soon the country became less settled. Indians became thicker and white men got scarce. Soon the short scrub and bushes were left behind and he found himself out in the middle of the vast Western Canadian prairies.

Not a tree or bush anywhere. Even along the river banks, where trees generally were thick, could be

found only a spare tree here and there. Nothing but long, sloping hills and vast level plains met his steady gaze. The grass was beginning to turn brown and yellow in the early autumn. Great flocks of ducks were seen daily, flying from the small sloughs to the larger lakes. Soon they were joined by the great wild Canadian gray geese. They flew by in long V-shaped columns. Here and there would be seen a few small, white, wavy geese, and their larger cousins—the big, graceful, white swans. Along the hill slopes great herds of antelope grazed. Big jackrabbits, beginning to turn white, would jump out of old badger holes and bound away a few yards and then sit up and watch as the red-coated rider passed on.

Indian encampments dotted the plains here and there. They seemed friendly but they never tried to encounter him unless forced to. He conversed with the chiefs and in a roundabout way he would get them to talk of the half-breed, Lacey. Some had seen him, others had not. Some had heard of him, but in every case he had gone west and Wilson always followed.

AND so the time went on. Out in the middle of the vast Canadian prairies, without fear, he rode on. He was soon known to the Indians as "the police with the big horse." The Western Indians heard of him and laughed because they thought Jean was never to be caught. They knew that the Mounted Police always lived up to their motto: "Get your man," but they thought that Jean was going to show them that for once they were going to lose out. But after the Indians became acquainted with him, they doubted. They had seen Indians arrested when the police had to get their man at the point of the gun. They knew that the police never hesitated to draw their guns and after they saw

Wilson they knew that he was set upon getting his man, no matter what the cost.

Wilson soon noticed that the wind frequented the north more and blew less from the south. The nights were frosty and sleeping out was no sport. The days were sunny and warm; not a cloud marred the clear blue of the skies. At noon when he stopped to eat and give Starlight a rest, he would lie on his back and gaze into their clear blue and turquoise depths and wonder at the vastness of the universe.

Surely this was God's land out here. Yet civilization was slowly creeping into it. The vast herds of buffalo were giving way to innumerable herds of cattle and horses. Only the antelope seemed to be holding their own.

The white man was coming in. The Indians, who for countless years had held undisputed sway, were going. Going? Yes, as the Mound Builders had come and gone, so the Indian had come, but was now going. As the great Roman Empire was built and destroyed, so the Indian empire was built, but was now being destroyed.

Where the Indian had lived in peace and plenty the white man was going to live in style. Yes, that civilized race was coming with its firewater and sin to take this lovely land, where God alone had reigned, from the Indian, to turn it into a land of mills, factories, foundries and farms, with great cities and towns. Soon the hills would lie with vast fields of grain covering them. Oh! how could God let them take this lovely land? Yet it was going, and Wilson was there to prepare the way. Yes, he, as all other police, were putting the fear of the white

man into the Indian.

So he would dream on until he thought Starlight was ready, then he would call him and the noble animal always responded, for he loved his master. He would stand while Wilson threw the saddle on and then they were away, westward bound!



CHAPTER IV.



CROSS the northern horizon great masses of black clouds were rising. Their outer edges were trimmed with white and their quick motion told that there was a swift wind behind them. Nowhere else in the sky could be found a cloud. The sun shone down from a clear sky. A light breeze blew from the north, and everything seemed calm and peaceful.

Within ten minutes the sun was blotted out and a heavy, cold, north wind swept across the prairies. Behind it came a vast sheet of swiftly rushing snow. Where a few minutes before all was peace and quiet, rushed a hurling, stinging sheet of snow before a wind that blew a hurricane. The thermometer fell from temperate to below zero. The wind cut through and chilled one to the very marrow of his bones. After a distance of a dozen yards all sight was lost in the vast rushing sheets of snow. It was a typical Western Canadian blizzard, one of those that are common to the prairies during the long months of late fall and winter, and out in this blizzard Wilson was lost!

He was a couple of hours' ride west of Medicine Hat when the blizzard came down upon him. He turned his horse and drifted with the storm and trusted to Fate. No shelter was to be found anywhere. In the ravines short scrub abounded in plenty, but these were soon covered in deep drifts of snow. Across the open prairie the wind

had full sweep, and to stop there meant certain death from cold.

Drifting with the storm, plunging through snow-drifts, through the valleys and over the plains, Wilson's mighty stallion bore him on until they reached the ever-winding South Saskatchewan River. Here they descended as far as they could down the slope. They stopped just in time or they would have ridden over a cut bank that fell sheer into the river.

They made their way along its upper edge until they came to where the slope itself emerged into a high cut bank that fell from above, down to Wilson's level. At its base a narrow trail wound around the top of the cut bank that fell into the river. The trail seemed to be in use so Wilson followed it.

ABOVE him rose a towering cut bank of solid earth; below him the great cut bank continued into the river. Along the edge there was no room for a horse to turn. It was dangerous but there was no way out. Once around the base of the cliff, he saw a great cave come into view. Here the trail stopped, so Wilson plunged into the cave.

Then he dismounted and turned to his horse. "Well, Starlight, old boy," he said, "this isn't a king's palace, but I guess you and I'll have to make it our sleeping quarters for the night. I wonder if anybody ever left any wood in these diggings. We've just simply got to have a fire or you'll lose your master. I don't know about you, but it's a cinch I can't hang around this hole without freezing to death inside of an hour. What do you think about it?"

Starlight only rubbed his nose on Wilson's shoulder and Wilson gave him a hearty slap on the neck and left him standing just inside the entrance while he went to

hunt for something to make a fire.

About three hundred feet within the cave Wilson came to an abrupt stop. He had run into something hard, but he knew it wasn't the walls of the cave. He lit a match and by its dim glow he saw a neat pile of cases. They reached to the ceiling and upon looking them over he judged that there were around five hundred cases. He pulled one down and broke it open and emptied its contents out onto the floor. From the noise that ensued, Wilson knew that it was bottles. But bottles of what? What could those cases of bottles be doing in this lonely cave? He lit another match and as he gazed upon those bottles littered upon the floor he neither spoke nor moved. The match burned down until it nipped his fingers. With a cry of "Whisky!" he dropped the match and proceeded to break open case after case.

He carried the empty boxes out to the mouth of the cave and made a fire. After getting warm he unsaddled Starlight and then went back to proceed with his work of destruction. At last darkness came and the snow covered the mouth of the cave under a high drift. When Wilson had destroyed every bottle it was late in the night. He came back to the mouth of the cave, replenished the fire, ate a small share of his rations, then rolled himself up in his blankets and went to sleep.

SUDDENLY he was awakened by Starlight's whinny. He sprang to his feet and looked about. Then, as he recalled his experiences of the previous night, a smile spread across his face. The sun's faint rays had made their way into the cave above a high drift of snow that nearly hid the entrance. He looked up at the rays of sunlight and then at his watch.

"Nine o'clock!" he exclaimed. "Starlight, old boy,

I ought to be horsewhipped for sleeping so long. I guess you're mighty hungry, but you're not the only one. I'm going to have something to eat and then we'll just proceed to get out of this forsaken hole. See those rays up there? That means that the sun is up, so we'll soon be in town."

So saying, he started a roaring fire and sat down to eat. After satisfying his hunger he saddled Starlight and turned to make an opening in the drift to escape by just as the big drift overbalanced and fell into the river. A great flood of cold, frosty air rushed into the cave.

Wilson stood awestruck with the scene that was then presented to his view. At the mouth of the cave a great gap started. Far across the gap huge cut banks and cliffs rose up to stop suddenly and flow away in a vast plain. Here and there the cut banks gave way to gentle slopes, covered by short scrub and bushes, and over all a great white mantle of snow shone and glistened in the sunlight.

Suddenly, as if he had dropped from the sky, a man stood in the entrance. He wore an old hat that came far down over his ears. His face was hidden by a short, bushy beard, and an old coat drooped over his shoulders and down to his ankles. His feet were covered with wide bandages of sackcloth that were wound over his moccasins to keep his feet warm. He seemed more surprised than Wilson. His small, beady eyes seemed to look through Wilson and pass on into the depths of the cave, and as he stepped forward, his hand slipped into his coat pocket.

"Take your hand out of that pocket, pard," Wilson cried, and before the man had moved another muscle he was looking down the ugly black muzzle of a .45 gripped menacingly in Wilson's hand.

"Hold on there, Wilson," the bootlegger cried. "You got the drop on me so I might just as well come without trouble."

The bootlegger stepped forward with outstretched hands to receive the handcuffs. As Wilson was putting them on he drew back one hand and, stepping forward, delivered a stinging blow on the point of Wilson's chin, knocking him to the floor. Wilson's rage arose and he sprang to his feet only to look down the muzzle of a .32 that the bootlegger shoved under his nose.

"You don't want to get too fresh, young man," the bootlegger sneered. "You handle that gun of yours a little careless. Now, for that, I'm going to see daylight through your head, but first of all I want you to have a look at your pal. C'mon in, Jean, and have a look at the boy now!"

Just then Wilson's feet fell from under him and he sprang in a heavy tackle at the man's knees. The fellow's gun went off only to send a harmless bullet over Wilson's head, and before he knew it the .32 was knocked from his hand and the handcuffs were cutting deep into his wrists.

Then Jean Laceau stepped into the cave only to meet the wicked muzzle of Wilson's gun.

Wilson smiled and said, "'Lo, Jean, you come to my tea party?"

Laceau muttered a curse and then, quick as lightning sprang backward and dived headlong into the river, fifty feet below. Wilson was too surprised to pull the trigger. He sprang forward and leaned over the edge of the cliff and watched. Laceau had made a neat dive and when he came to the surface he was far down the river. He went on down with the swift current and at last disappeared around the bend.

Wilson turned to his captive and said, "Jean seems to be fond of cold baths, doesn't he?"

The bootlegger swore vengeance and Wilson laughed. "C'mon, old top," he said, as he dug him in the ribs with his gun, "you better march along with me like a good little boy."

Wilson then led him up to the prairie level and put him on his own horse, then he mounted Starlight and led the bootlegger and Jean's horse into Medicine Hat.



CHAPTER V.



RUNCH, crunch, crunch came the answer of the impact of Starlight's hoofs in the soft snow. The air was cold and frosty and it made Wilson draw his sheepskin tighter. A heatless sun shone down from a clear blue sky. He looked up into its cold, frosty depths and it reminded him of a huge bowl turned upside down, forming a vast hollow dome of silence. Everything seemed hollow. Far to the north came the dull, hollow roar of a train. Away to the south a lonely coyote raised its head and sent forth its hungry cry. It sounded hollow. Wilson tried to sing, but the song sounded hollow. Sound seemed to travel for miles. Nowhere could be seen a living thing. It seemed as if nothing would make a noise. How funny that the cold, frosty air would make such a difference to the traveling sound. Wilson marveled at the silence of that vast plain of glittering snow covered with that great dome of blue sky under which everything seemed hollow.

Then slowly the landscape seemed to rise into the sky at the horizon. He could see for miles. He looked to the north. Far away he could see a big Indian encampment. He watched it rise high into the sky until the teepees seemed to look a mile high. To the south the banks of the Bow River seemed to be a ridge of mountains. Behind him a train was descending out of the sky. In front of him lay ridge after ridge of high hills. He looked and wondered. Then he became nervous. Then

slowly the land fell back to its natural place. He looked around for the train; it was gone. The banks of the river had dropped to a little black line. The Indian encampment had utterly disappeared and the hills to the west fell back to a level plain.

"Funny," he muttered. "I wonder what that was?" A little while after he slapped Starlight's glossy neck. "I got it!" he exclaimed. "Starlight, that was a mirage!" A piece of snow flew up in Starlight's face and, as if in answer to Wilson's exclamation, he shook his head.

"You old hypocrite!" Wilson cried; "that *was* a mirage. You see them on the prairie early in the morning just after the sun rises and sometimes at night, when the sun sets. This is only on an extremely cold day, though. Also in the summer you see them when it's so hot you think you're going to roast. They are quite frequent in the spring, too. You can't deny it, either, because I read it in a book, savvy?" Starlight did not shake his head this time because he had no reason to.

Then the snow seemed to glitter with a greater brightness. It hurt his eyes and they became dazzled. Soon they began to pain and the more he rubbed them the worse they got. Then at last it came. Everything went black before his eyes. He couldn't see and the pain made him groan. What could be the matter? Then he knew that he was snow blind!

Snow blindness is the dread of the great Northwest. It comes on a man suddenly, leaving him helpless as a child, for with the blindness comes a kind of lightheadedness that borders on delirium. A moment before Wilson had had no idea of harm—and now he was totally blind.

Like a shooting meteor it came to him. It left him lost and he knew not where to go or what to do. He had heard of this great blindness but he had never seen or witnessed it. He tied his handkerchief over his eyes and trusted to Fate and she came in the form of a friend.

"'Lo, Wilson, what's the matter?" came an unknown voice.

"I'm snow blind," Wilson answered. "Whoever you are, would you mind taking me to the nearest town?"

"Well," answered the unknown, "the nearest town is Bassano. We have a police barracks there and that, with an old box car for a station, is the whole city. It's somewhere though, but don't call it a town!"

"Say!" Wilson cried, "who are you, anyway."

"Me?" answered the unknown. "Oh, I'm Sergeant Davis from Bassano. I'm stationed there at present. You better let me lead your horse."

"Keep back, man!" Wilson cried. "He wouldn't let you lead him on a bet. You lead the way and I'll follow your sound. Lead on."

A few days after, Wilson stepped out of a dark room in the barracks. His sight had returned and he was itching to be on the trail. He opened the door to go out; the bright snow dazzled his eyes and he closed it again. Just then the Sergeant came in.

"Hello, Wilson," he cried, "how's your lamps?"

"Fine," Wilson answered. "The snow dazzles them a bit, though, but I'll soon get used to it. When do I leave here?"

"Well," the Sergeant replied, "you can go as soon as you wish. I'm going to Gleichen tomorrow. How would you like to come along? You can have a visit with old Crowfoot. I've got an idea that Laceau is out on the

Blackfeet Reserve right now."

"That's fine," Wilson replied; "I'll come along."

THAT night a heavy snow fell. The morning dawned cold and cloudy. As the two Police rode along the sky gradually cleared. Wilson noticed the footprints of many animals in the snow. Sometimes the small tracks of a weasel crossed his trail. Farther on the triangular track of a rabbit was passed. The coyote's light tread and the badger's long, swinging trail were plainly visible. Then came the small trail of a field mouse that ended in a big splash marked with the claw prints and feathers of some bird of prey. Then Wilson saw a big white owl spread its great wings and arise gracefully into the air from a rock. Then he knew the mouse's fate.

Suddenly his eye rested on a trail that made him whistle with surprise. Just then a bevy of prairie chicken flew up from under his horse's nose. The horse shied and bolted down the hillside. Davis, who had been looking at the drifting clouds, put spurs to his horse and followed Wilson.

They swung down the hill and around a cut bank and finally came out on the level of Crowfoot Creek. Wilson checked his frightened stallion and Davis joined him.

"Say, Sergeant," Wilson cried, "did you see those footprints back there in the snow?"

"No," Davis answered; "if you hadn't been watching footprints we wouldn't be here now."

"Never mind grumbling about where we are," Wilson answered, good-naturedly. "You just trot along back with me and take a look at 'em, will yuh?"

Davis turned and followed Wilson. When they got back to the scene of the past excitement Wilson sprang

from his horse and pointing to the imprint of a moccasined foot, cried, "What do you call that, Sergeant?"

"By hec!" the Sergeant cried, "an Indian runner!"

"Yes," Wilson answered, "but it isn't a Blackfoot."

"No," the Sergeant answered, "it's a Sarcee. You can tell by the shape of the moccasin. Now what's a Sarcee runner doing down here? Their reserve is west of Fort Calgary. That runner is headed north. There is no reserve north of here for some miles and the Blackfeet Reserve is about ten miles south."

"Didn't the Corporal from Gleichen tell you the other day that old Crowfoot had a hunting expedition up Crowfoot Creek?"

"You're right, Wilson," the Sergeant replied. "We must see Corporal Winning at once and find out more of this expedition. Let's go."

NEXT day Wilson rode into the great Blackfeet camp, south of Gleichen.

He rode up to Crowfoot's cabin and dismounted. Crowfoot greeted him and Wilson left his horse and entered the cabin. When he was seated he offered Crowfoot his pouch and Crowfoot filled his pipe; Wilson did likewise, and they smoked in silence. Suddenly Wilson said, "Too cold to sleep in wigwam now?"

"Huh," Crowfoot answered, "sleep in wigwam in summer. Winter move in cabin. Live like white man. Wigwam too cold."

"Your hunters up Crowfoot Creek sleep in wigwam, eh?"

Wilson watched Crowfoot's face. It showed a faint surprise, but he did not answer, so Wilson continued: "What does the Sarcee runner say?"

Crowfoot leaned forward. "No runner come," he answered.

"Crowfoot, you are a big chief; you hold the great Blackfeet Confederacy in your hands. What would the chiefs of the Peigans and Bloods say if they knew that the great chief of the Blackfeet lied?"

"Crowfoot no lie," he declared. "No runner come."

"Listen, Crowfoot," Wilson answered. "Yesterday a Sarcee runner came here. He left to call your chiefs from the hunt. You will take council. Why? No, you don't need to answer, because I know. Listen to the son of the Great White Mother across the sea.

"Louis Riel is back at Batoche. He is going to rise in rebellion and he wants the western Indians to rise, too. If the Indian rises the Great White Mother will be angry. She will send her soldiers into the West and sweep the Indians off the prairie. Her soldiers across the sea are like the grass on the prairie. She has guns that speak like the thunder when the rains come in summer. You have no big guns. You have very few rifles. We have lots of rifles and powder. Every man has a gun. Your Indians would be like papooses in the arms of their squaws.

"Yesterday a Sarcee runner came and stopped here. He wants you to join in with your brothers, the Western Indians, and drive the white man from the prairies. Bah! You will never run the white man from the West. He is like the mosquitoes in summer.

"I come now to warn you not to rise, as it will do you no good. The buffalo is gone. You must depend on the Government. If you chase the white man away you will die of hunger. Remember, Crowfoot, the police are your friends. They treat you as brothers. How would you repay them for their kindness? Would you rise up and drive your friends away? You are the white man's friend. Heed not your northern brothers, the half-breeds at Batoche. If Jean Lacey comes here, drive him away.

He is a fool. He has murdered the police and the white man; he will murder Indians, too. He is a whisky peddler. Soon I shall put the handcuffs on him and take him to be hanged. He will look like a whipped pup before the hand of an angry master."

"Huh!" Crowfoot broke in. "Laceau come last night, bring much whisky! My young men get much drunk. Laceau go this morning. Take lots horse, fur and money. He go Sarcee Reserve. Crowfoot no like Laceau. He no good!"

WILSON concealed a look of surprise and continued: "Yes, I know he was here last night. I have come for him now. You see, I have come even now to help you to keep the whisky peddler away. I don't want to see your Indians fight and get killed for nothing. If they fight, the white man will kill them all. Do you remember when the Sioux tried to run Custer out of the West? That was over in the United States a few years ago. The Sioux lost many braves and Custer lost many soldiers, but today the Sioux live on a reserve. It did them no good and it will be the same with you. It will do you no good. Have you heard of the rebellion Louis Riel raised back in 1870? He was defeated and he went to the States. He will be defeated again, so I warn you. Keep friends with the white man and don't make the Great White Mother angry. I must go now to arrest Jean Laceau. Here, have a smoke before I go."

Crowfoot refilled his pipe from Wilson's pouch and they smoked in silence. When they were finished, Wilson arose and extended his hand. Crowfoot hesitated, but finally shook hands with him and then he swung into the saddle, bade Crowfoot good-bye and rode out of camp. Crowfoot stood long in the doorway thinking

of the words of the red-coated son of the Great White Mother.

WILSON swung out across the prairie and headed north for the Bow River. Great coulees ran north and south from the river, some with little streams flowing through their bottoms. They were all frozen now. The slopes were covered with alder, willow, poplar and saskatoon bushes. They were all bare of leaves and the snow clung to their branches. He was getting close to the mountains now, and the little streams and rivers were lined with trees. The Bow River was now clothed with tall fir and spruce which loomed high above his head. He crossed on the ice and turned up the Bow, and headed for Fort Calgary.

As he rode along he noticed that the air was getting warmer. The sky was overcast, except at the horizon far off to the southwest. Here the clouds broke and formed a great arch, high in the center and meeting the horizon again in the west and south.

Wilson watched the arch and wondered if it was the great chinook arch that he had heard so much about, that always formed in the southwest before the warm chinook wind hurled itself across the prairies. A couple of hours afterwards he knew. The snow suddenly became soft. A great calm prevailed, and then a heavy gale swept down upon him. It nearly took his breath away. It was hot, stifling. The snow began to melt. Little streams trickled down the hillside, and before night came not a spot of snow was left on the southern slope of the hills, while the northern slopes held only small patches here and there. As the great blizzard had come from the north, so the chinook came from the south. Fast as the snow had come, faster it was going!

Next morning it was like spring. Wilson arose and stretched himself. Starlight raised his head and winnied.

"C'mon, old chap," Wilson cried. "We've got to resume our way. Fort Calgary has to be reached as soon as possible. This isn't the way to act when there's work to do."

HE THREW the saddle on the waiting Starlight and started off at a light canter. He was just going around a high cut bank when he heard the voice of a man crying for help. He stopped and listened. Again the cry came. It was across the river.

"What's the matter?" Wilson cried in answer.

"Come here; I'm hurt."

"All right," he answered; "I'm coming."

He crossed the river and entered a little grove of alders and willows.

"Where are you?"

"Right here," came the answer.

Wilson sprang from his horse and pushed the bushes aside and there lay a young man. Wilson judged him to be about twenty-two years old. He wore a big, broad-rimmed hat, a huge pink and green bandana handkerchief, great studded leather wristlets and a pair of gaudy orange-colored chaps. Truly he was decked out in Nature's most striking colors.

"What's the matter, partner?" Wilson asked.

"I don't know. I think my leg is broken. My horse slipped and fell on me. I can't walk and my leg hurts something awful."

"Let me help you to get out into the open where I can get at you. That's the stuff."

He helped the young fellow through the bushes and into the open. Starlight snorted at the gaudy colors that were drawn before him. The only thing that seemed natural about him was his buckskin coat. A look of surprise and delight came over his face when he saw Starlight, and he cried, "Say! Are you Wilson, the man with the big horse?"

"I guess so," Wilson answered. "Why?"

"Gee, I'm sure glad to see you," the puncher cried. "I've heard so many stories about you that I've taken an interest in you. There isn't an Indian in the whole West that is in a hurry to make an enemy of you. They think you're superhuman by the way you can sling those guns of yours, and they think that horse is an evil spirit."

"Forget that stuff," Wilson broke in, "and help get these chaps off. I don't think you're hurt very bad. Wow! Your leg's broke. Say, it doesn't seem to be bothering you!"

"What! Is she broke?" the young fellow cried. "Oh, well, it's only fifteen miles to Calgary. Can you take me in?"

"Sure," Wilson answered; "I can't leave you here. Where's your horse?"

"Over there somewhere," answered the cowboy, pointing down the river. "He's tame and you'll know him—he's still got the saddle on."

WILSON mounted Starlight and rode in the direction indicated. He soon found a big roan horse with a beautiful Mexican silver mounted saddle on. He brought the horse back and helped the young fellow into the saddle and they started for Calgary.

"How did it happen?" Wilson asked, after they were well on the road.

"Well," answered the young fellow, "you see, three of those thieving Piegan Indians drove about twenty head of cattle away from the Circle D ranch, over south. I don't know why they came this way, but they did. I guess they knew this chinook was coming and they wanted to throw the blame on the Blackfeet and then take them in a roundabout way to their reserve. Anyway, I saw one of 'em and I know him. His name is Hawkeye. He's got a big scar over his right eye. Well, I followed 'em until the chinook covered their trail. My horse slipped coming down a hill back there and I went under. My foot caught in the stirrups, and when the horse got up he broke my leg. I tried to get back into the saddle, but my leg hurt so bad and the horse was so high that I gave it up and started to crawl to Fort Calgary as you came along. I hid in the bushes in case you were an Indian. I wouldn't dare let an Indian get me like I was. When I saw your red coat I called you. I didn't know you until I got a look at your horse. You know the rest."

"What's your name?" Wilson asked.

"I don't know. They call me 'Pete' over at the ranch."

"Haven't you got any other name besides Pete?"

"Not as I know of."

"Where were you born?"

"I don't know."

"You don't even know who your parents were?"

"No."

"You haven't any idea who your mother was or where you came from?"

"No, I often wish I did know. I'd love to have a mother and father. I used to live with the Indians and

they called me 'White Face.' I led a dog's life there so I ran away and became a cowpuncher on the Circle D. An old Mexican gave me his saddle and the boss gave me these chaps, and I worked to buy the horse for myself. The boys are awfully good to me, but it isn't like a mother. The boss will be sore now because I haven't turned up. He'll think I've run away. He doesn't know the cattle are gone."

A wave of sympathy swept over Wilson. He turned and looked at the weary boy, for he seemed to be no more than a boy. He gave a start as he looked at the weather-beaten features. They seemed familiar, but he said nothing. He thought it might be only a passing fancy.

"Don't worry," he said in a kind voice. "I'll call round at the ranch and tell the boss. How far is it?"

"Over south about thirty miles," Pete answered. "You'll find it easy enough."

Wilson rode into Fort Calgary and left Pete at the Barracks, and told the inspector all about him. Then he announced that he was going over to the Circle D and from there to the Piegan Reserve to get the thieves.



CHAPTER VI.



AS WILSON rode along to the Circle D he was deep in thought. He found out that a great desire for friendship had come into his heart towards this poor fellow, Pete. Wilson thought of how Pete had suffered. Living with the Indians, he never knew what a home or a father and mother were; he didn't even know his name. And yet he seemed cheerful. Then he thought of himself. Just because his father was going to sell his horse he had left home, mother and father and everything, and now he didn't know at what moment he would be shot down and left lying on the prairie, prey for bird and beast. How little a man appreciates home until he leaves. Great tears rolled down his cheeks as he thought of how he had left his mother. The Indians called him a great man, but if they only knew the struggle within his breast they would have another name for him.

At last the Circle D rose into view and he forgot his troubles as he rode toward the ranch house.

He rode up to a couple of cowboys who were cussing each other good-naturedly and talking of the disappearance of Pete.

"Good afternoon, boys," Wilson greeted. "Where's the foreman?"

"We hain't done nothin' to be sent ter jail for," one of them answered.

"I know," Wilson laughed; "I just want to see the

foreman.

"Well," the same fellow answered, "Seein' as you're a big guy and you hold the law in yer hands, I guess I'll have to tell you. He's up in the house flirtin' with the cook!"

"Say, that's funny," Wilson answered; "I saw the cook as I came round the buildings there. I don't envy him his girl, seeing that it's a good natured Chinaman! Where's the foreman? Hurry up, now!"

"What you want ter see 'im fer?"

"That's my business."

"Don't get sore now."

"You infernal bunch of cowpunchers! You might think you're funny, but I don't. My time's precious. There's liable to be a rebellion here any day and I haven't time to fool around. Where's the boss?"

"Now yer talkin'. I'm the boss!"

"Boss my grandmother!" Wilson cried. "I guess the chink can tell me more than you can."

Wilson turned, rode up to the cook shack, dismounted and entered.

"Hello, Charlie," he cried; "where's the boss?"

"Catchee boss over there, see." And the cook pointed to the man Wilson had been talking to.

"Say, cook, are you fooling?"

"No foolee. Catchee boss over there. Stlaw boss with him. You t'inkee me lie? *Git out!*"

"Hold your horses, cook! That pie looks good. Did you make it?"

THE CHINK opened the door and was about to throw Wilson out when his eyes rested on Starlight. He backed up and looked at Wilson.

"You name Wilson?"

"Sure; what else could it be?"

The chink turned and cut a great hunk of pie and handed it to him. "Go catchee boss over there," he cried. "Git out!"

Wilson looked around. Then deeming it wise to go he mounted Starlight and rode up to the foreman. The foreman grinned.

"Well, did you find the boss?"

"I guess you're the guy I'm hunting," Wilson replied.

"Now you've found 'im," the boss replied, "you kin just tell 'im what's makin' yer back itch."

Wilson dismounted, filled his mouth full of pie and walked up to the boss and calmly said: "I've just ridden in to tell you that your cowboy, Pete, is under a rest!"

"Pete arrested!" the boss cried. "What's he done?"

Wilson was getting his own back and he made up his mind to get one hundred per cent interest. He went on eating his pie, then, "I don't reckon he done anything."

"What you arrest him fer, then?"

"Oh! Just because."

"Because my granny!" the boss yelled. He shook his fist in Wilson's face and went on: "You wall-eyed pieface you, you fetch Pete back to this 'ere ranch before supper or I'll fill yer ol' hide so full o' lead you'll think yer a lead factory."

"Hold your horses," Wilson answered with a smile. "Remember, you're talking to an officer of the law!"

"Law be hanged!" the foreman cried. "You guys think you kin ride around on these 'ere prairies and put the irons on anybody you come across. You might do it in some places, but you can't do it with any o' my men. Windy," he turned to the straw boss, "you go fetch in

every cowpuncher on the range and we'll go in and shoot up little ole Fort Calgary and bring Pete back. Hurry up now!"

"All right, Gordon," replied the surprised Windy.

"Hold on now," Wilson cried. "You fellows don't know what you're up against. Don't lose your heads!"

Windy turned to leave, but Wilson caught him by the arm and brought him back. As soon as Wilson's hand gripped his arm he knew he was no match for him, so he turned quietly.

"Look here," Wilson cried. "I rode in here and asked where the foreman was. You tried to make a fool of me, but he who laughs last laughs longest. I guess you misunderstood me when I said Pete was under a rest. His leg is broken and he is taking a rest in Calgary. You better take things a little easier and don't ever try to put one over a Mounted Policeman. Her Majesty's police don't ride these plains to be made fools of. Now you better sit down and listen like two good little boys."

THEN WILSON told about the cattle thieves and how Pete had followed and got his leg broken. Then he fired question after question at Gordon as to Pete's birth and history, but the foreman knew no more than Pete had told him, so Wilson rose to go.

"Where you goin' now?" Gordon asked.

"To arrest Hawkeye and his two helpers."

"Have you had dinner?"

"No."

"Windy, put Wilson's horse in the barn and feed him. C'mon, Wilson, and get something to eat. No man ever left this ranch without getting fed!"

Before Wilson could intercept him, Windy caught hold of the lines to lead Starlight to the barn. Starlight reared into the air and would have crushed Windy to a pulp, but he was a cowboy and had had such experiences before. He dropped the lines and sprang out of reach. Wilson sprang in between the two and caught Starlight and subdued him. Then he turned to Windy. "Don't ever do that again," he cried. "I'm the only man that has ever laid a hand on him. If I hadn't been here he would have killed you. You lead the way to the barn and I'll follow."

After man and horse had been fed, Gordon bade Wilson good-bye and returned to his work. Once he turned and watched the mighty horse as he bore his master onwards.

"Windy," he said, as he gazed after the disappearing horseman, "that's the best matched pair I ever saw. There ain't no flies on 'em and that feller's all right. I've got respect fer a feller that can turn the tables on you like he did. Windy, if ever you can help that boy I want you to do it; or if ever I find out you didn't, I'll fire you! We're all goin' in to see Pete tonight." And they did.



CHAPTER VII.



WILSON rode up to the Piegan reserve, calmly looked the place over, then rode into camp. Nobody could have been less wanted just then than Wilson. A big sun dance was in full swing. Wilson rode up, dismounted and watched the dancers. No sooner had he taken up his position than an Indian charged upon him with a gleaming knife.

He stepped aside, caught the Indian by the wrist and the knife fell to the ground. Then with an uppercut he knocked the Indian clean off his feet and gave him a kick that sent him spinning in amongst the dancers.

"That is no way to treat a friend," he cried.

"Huh! Why you come when Indian dance?" an old chief spoke up.

"Her Majesty's Mounted Police can go wherever they want to whenever they want to and the Indian cannot say no! I wanted to see your dancers and what's more, I'm going to!"

He seated himself upon the ground and prepared to watch, but a sharp command from the chief brought the dance to a standstill.

"Why does my white brother come?" the chief cried, in haughty tones. "My white brother knows that they do not want him to watch them dance. Go, my brother, while the Indian allows you to."

"Bah!" Wilson cried. "Do you think I'll leave camp now? Go on with your dance!"

"Say, Wilson," came a well-known voice. "By Gar; you better leave. Dis is no place for a police. Dem dancers are crazy mad. Dey eat you alive, by Gar!"

Wilson sprang to his feet. It was Jean Lacey. Wilson left his horse and darted into the wigwam from whence the voice came. The back of the wigwam moved just as he entered, but the place itself was empty. He ran around the back, but the half-breed had disappeared. Just then he saw a rider vanish over a ridge about a hundred yards away. He rushed back for his mount. As he came around the wigwam an Indian screamed. He looked up and saw the trouble.

AN INDIAN had tried to lead Starlight away. He now lay groaning on the ground. Wilson was just in time to see Starlight give vent to an unearthly scream and charge those naked, painted warriors.

Wilson saw an Indian raise a rifle; his revolver spoke and the gun flew out of the Indian's hands and spun across the ground. Then he leaped forward and cried, "Starlight, come here!"

Starlight stopped, wheeled and trotted up to Wilson. By now the whole camp was in an uproar. Wilson stepped in front of his horse and several young bucks charged him. They stopped at the points of the little black muzzles of Wilson's .45s.

"Chief," he cried, "I hold twelve dead men in my hands! Quiet your Indians!"

At a command from the chief the Indians quieted down. Then the chief walked up to Wilson and asked, "What does my white brother want?"

"I want Hawkeye and the two Indians that were

with him when he drove those cattle off the Circle D Ranch," Wilson cried.

"Huh," the chief grunted, "Hawkeye gone on big hunt. No steal cattle!"

"Chief," Wilson cried, "that is a lie!"

The chief's eyes went bloodshot. With a fierce cry he leaped at Wilson, only to stop at the point of the gun.

"Listen, chief," Wilson cried, "don't get rash now. I'm your friend. You had Jean Laceau here, but he is gone. If your Indians had left my horse alone I would have him now. Now he is gone, but I shall get him yet. You said Hawkeye was gone but he isn't. I've never seen Hawkeye but the police do not have to see their man. They know him! Now watch me."

He turned and looked over the crowd of Indians. He was looking for the scar over the right eye. At last he saw it, so he stepped forward and pushed the Indians aside. Just as Wilson reached him the scarred Indian ducked and tried to escape, but Wilson caught him by the shoulder and cried, "Hawkeye, I arrest you in the name of the Queen!"

And before Hawkeye could protest, he stood handcuffed. Two other Indians immediately set up a cry and Wilson turned and saw them before the rest joined in. Again Wilson drew his guns and they quieted down.

Then he stepped up to the two Indians that started the cry. They were both together and before they knew it they were looking down the muzzles of Wilson's .45s.

"I arrest you in the name of the Queen," Wilson repeated. "Put your hands up over your heads. Higher now. These guns are liable to go off! Away up, that's it." Then Wilson put the handcuffs on with one hand while he kept the other Indian covered with his gun.

Soon the three Indians stood handcuffed. See, chief," he cried, "it is not hard for the police to catch the thieves. Where are the cattle they stole?"

"Huh! No steal cattle," the chief declared.

"Sure they did," Wilson replied. "What's that in that kettle over there?"

"Deer, no cattle."

Wilson looked into the kettle. "Ah," he said, "this is beef. So you have killed them. What will the Commissioner say? Why do you turn against your white brother and steal his cattle?"

"Huh!" The chief shot a wicked glance at him. "No steal cattle."

"You old reprobate!" Wilson cried, "You're worse than an old mule I used to know back home. I guess I'll go now."

He turned and marched two of the Indian captives toward Starlight. "I'll just tie you to the stirrup," he said.

The Indians hung back and refused to go near the horse. Then the old chief said, "Huh, no take Indian like that. He 'fraid horse. Think horse devil. No good, no take like that."

So Wilson borrowed a horse and took his captives into Fort Macleod.

"Ah," cried the Commissioner, "this is a fine piece of work. How did you find them so soon?"

"Guilty conscience needs no asking," Wilson replied. "They were having a sun dance on the Piegan Reserve, so while they were busy I just called in and got 'em. It was nothing!"

"A sun dance!" the Commissioner echoed. "Did you stop it?"

"Yes," answered Wilson.

"You reckless fool!" the Commissioner cried. "Don't you know those Indians are crazy mad when they're dancing?"

"They acted like it," Wilson replied, "but I saw my chance, so I got them while chances were good. I always believed that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush so I took them before they got into the bush."

The Commissioner burst out laughing. "Wilson, he said, 'you've done what has never been done before. You did your duty and I congratulate you for getting away with a whole hide.'"

Three weeks after, Wilson headed for the Kootenays. Jean Laceau had gone to the mountains.



CHAPTER VIII.



AFTER packing food and blankets, Wilson set out with a light heart. The snow had fallen and winter was back again. He knew that those two hundred miles would drag, but he was to enter the mountains, so why worry?

Far out into the foothills he wound his way, across frozen streams, through great coulees, bush and scrub, under overhanging cut banks, through great snow drifts, fighting the cold north wind and frost, he fought his way on.

The great ridge of mountains that looked like a long line gradually took form and shape. Great snow-clad peaks seemed to rise to heaven. As he gazed on the splendor, he was shaken with fear intermingled with joy and delight. Who has not trembled as he gazed on the Rocky Mountains for the first time? Those great jutting towers of rock are enough to shake man's whole soul and make him admire the wonders of God's creation.

He entered Death Valley. A cold shudder passed over him as he gazed on that bleak, cold scenery. Down both sides of that mighty valley for sixty miles lay the white bones of dead animals. They were scattered from one end to the other like a carpet of lilies jutting through a late snow. Under the snow a poisonous moss grew. Even the frozen stream that trickled through the bottom was poison. For centuries animals had come to drink of

the poison water and eat the poison moss. For centuries they had died there, never leaving the valley until their bones rotted from the action of the elements.

At last Death Valley was left behind and he found himself inside the mighty Rockies. Great mountains rose up on both sides of him, to meet the sky. Some were clothed in fir and pine trees. Others were bare rock. Along the rivers great groves of poplar, cottonwood, alder and willow made it impossible to pass with a horse. He followed the old pioneers' trail around the base of mountains, through dim corridors of pine and spruce, laden with snow, through rocky caverns and canyons and ever onward into the heart of the wild Rockies.

FOR DAYS he pushed on. Those great, cold mountains reared up from every side and made him feel homesick. He thought of Pete. Poor Pete, homeless, motherless, fatherless Pete away back in Fort Calgary with a broken leg. Yet Pete had seemed happy and he even smiled when his leg pained him beyond endurance. If Pete were only with him now. He could face anything if he only had Pete as a partner.

At last the mountains seemed to fall away from him. Great pine trees tried to block his way. The bush was getting thicker and the snow deeper. At last he found himself out on the snow-covered levels of the Kootenay Lakes. His journey, although apparently ended, had really just begun. Now he had to find Jean and as he looked at those huge, silent mountains he wondered how the seemingly impossible was to be accomplished. Yet, with a light heart he set out to thread that maze of snow-covered mountains to track the fox to his den. To revenge his family and Her Majesty's Police that had fallen at his hands.

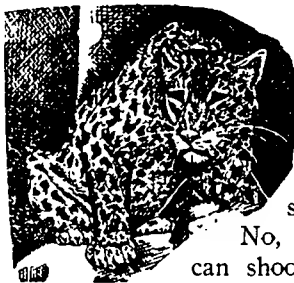
For weeks he traversed the rocky, winding paths until it seemed as if he would go mad. Cold and hunger forced themselves upon him. Many times he was about to turn back, but something seemed to call him and he went on. At last that something spoke.

He was riding down a thickly wooded trail. Giant fir and pine trees rose on each side and the snow from their branches would fall and cover both him and his horse. Suddenly, seemingly from nowhere, a bullet whistled past his head and buried itself in a tree behind him. Another passed through the crown of his hat!

QUICKLY and silently he dug Starlight in the ribs with his heels and darted off the trail and in behind a huge rock that completely covered both him and his horse from the enemy. He quickly dismounted and, pulling his rifle from its case on the saddle he lay flat on his stomach and waited. It seemed ages before he heard a sound, then:

"Ah, ha! By Gar. De beeg police dat never turns his back on de enemy, he run like a coyote from danger, ah, ha!"

"Jean!" Wilson taunted, "You are a dirty dog! The police never run. They do not lie behind trees and shoot



the man they want. They give him a fair chance. Jean, you are a coward. You sneak around and attack your enemy like the cougar, who attacks from behind and from above.

Step out into the open and I'll show you how a man fights!

No, you are afraid! You know I can shoot faster than you can. Bah!

two shots and you missed. A ten-year-old kid could do better than that. Step out and be a man!"

"No!" Jean replied, "I got you now, by Gar. You chase me too long. I shall keel you now. I geeve you no chance. Den I shall be free. Louis Riel and de Indian and breed, dey run de white man from de West. Ah, ha, I shoot you now, by Gar. Den I go to Batoche and help Riel. You kees your horse good-bye, and den I keel you and ride your horse!"

"I'd like to see you try it, Jean. If I don't kill you the horse will!"

"Keel me? Ha, ha, you are afraid to keel me."

"Step out where I can see you and I'll soon show you!"

"I stay here. You weel come out after a while."

"When I do come, you'll run like the dog that you are!"

"Listen, Wilson," came the answer, "dis ain't no teaparty. Dat time in de cave you make a fool of me. Now, by Gar, I make one beeg fool of you, my frien'. Ma'be you will not take de swim in de Bow, but in just a few minutes you will have one beeg chance to swim de Reevaire Jordan. Just stick your whiskaires around de rock and away dey go like de birds in de air."

"How about your own sportsmanship, Jean?"

There was no answer, so Wilson began to look around for a means of attack. He noticed that some rocks on one side would screen him from view, but it was dangerous work. He edged himself over and looked through between them. He could see nothing. He moved a little farther. Ah! there it was. Twenty yards away he could see a hand holding a rifle! That was all. The bush was too thick to see more. Slowly he drew his rifle forward. The hand moved and the wrist

was presented to view. It was the only way out, so Wilson took careful aim and fired. The half-breed's wrist was torn to splinters and the rifle fell into the bushes.

With a cry the breed leaped to his feet and disappeared from view. Wilson sprang from his hiding place and took up the chase. His prophecy had come true; Jean had run.

He followed the trail through the undergrowth and far up the mountainside. At last it led to a trodden down mass of snow, where a horse had been tied. The breed had mounted, and it was fruitless to pursue on foot, so he returned for Starlight to continue the chase. When he came around the rock, surprise awaited him. Starlight was gone!

Wilson called him, but he received no answer. Puzzled and mystified, he walked over to where Starlight had stood. In the snow he discerned the smooth imprint of moccasined feet. "So they have stolen my horse," he muttered. "Well, well. I'd like to know how they did it!"

He then set out up the trail they had taken. It was evident that they were having a hard time by the way the snow was scuffed up.

The trail was rocky and it led far up the mountainside, then it started to descend. It wound around through thickets and under huge jack pine and Douglas fir. Wilson could see that they were following an old trail, but it was so old and securely hidden that it was hard to find unless the person knew it was there.

Suddenly, Starlight's vicious scream rose from below. It was plain that he had gained a little freedom. Wilson dived into a thicket, slipped over rocks and boulders, waded through snowdrifts and fell in behind

a clump of poplar.

Scarcely fifty feet away the road ran. The horses were coming down and would pass him. Seeing that he had cut them off, he crawled close to the side of the road and lay down in the snow, securely shielded from view by a clump of young spruce.

Soon an Indian came into view. He was riding a good-sized cayuse and had a rope tied around the horn of the saddle. Next came Starlight. They had succeeded in getting a rope over his neck and a half-hitch around his nose. Thus the Indian in front was leading him. Behind him another Indian ran on foot. He carried a blacksnake quirt in his hand and was making free use of it on the balky stallion.

As WILSON watched that cruel blacksnake descend and resound on that glossy coat that had never known the sting of whip or gall of spur, his blood boiled within him. He let the first Indian go by, then Starlight passed. Blood was running from his nose and the hide was raw from the burn of the rope around his jaws. When he saw his horse, he was raging mad. He was going to spring out and fight hand to hand, but then the memory of the words he used the first night he had met Jean forced him to lie still. "Keep your head," sounded and tapped on his brain, so he waited for the Indian with the whip.

As the Indian passed, Wilson sprang from cover and delivered a stinging, short-arm jab to the point of the Indian's chin. It sent the dazed Indian sprawling into the snow and before he could arise Wilson tore the whip from his hand and brought the loaded butt down over his head, rendering him senseless.

The leading Indian untied his rope and was about

to make his get-away, but Wilson drew his gun and called a halt. The Indian didn't heed, so Wilson's .45 spoke once, twice, three times, and the fleeing horse stumbled and fell. The Indian swung free and ran on down the trail. Wilson jerked the rope loose from Starlight's head, swung into the saddle and gave pursuit. He gained on the Indian, then, blinded with madness, he brought the blacksnake down with a mighty sweep and drew it clean across the Indian's face, cutting the flesh to the bone.

Sliding from his galloping horse he turned and met the Indian's rush just in time to stop a gleaming knife. Then he gave the Indian a taste of the white man's knowledge of boxing. At last the Indian was knocked off his feet, and Wilson straddled him and put the handcuffs on. Starlight had wheeled and returned to his master.

JUST THEN another rider entered upon the scene. Looking up, Wilson beheld the towering figure of another "Mountie."

"Why, hullo!" Wilson cried. "Where in Sam Hill did you blow in from?"

"Hullo, Wilson!" the Mountie replied. "Me? Oh, I heard you shooting back there, so I started out to help you. I knew you were over this way somewhere. I saw where you had a racket back there at the rock, so I followed your trail up here. I was about four miles up the trail."

"Say!" Wilson cried. "You didn't see a rider go down that way, did you?"

"Rider? Why, yes. I saw a fellow going to beat the dickens down there about two miles up the trail. He swung into the bush when I saw him. His right hand

hung limp. Why, who was it?"

"It's Jean!" Wilson cried. "Why didn't you get him?"

"Jean!" the Mountie repeated. "Jean Laceau! Say, is that right?"

"Yes, he's got a bullet hole through his wrist. I told him that he would run like the dog he was when I came out from behind that rock, and, believe me, he did! After I came out these redskins slipped in and stole my horse. There's the result. I got 'em——Thunderation——he's gone!"

True, the Indian that had been knocked senseless had disappeared! He had been forgotten when the Mountie had arrived, and coming to and finding himself unwatched, had made his escape.

Knowing that it was useless to take up the chase, Wilson walked over to the fallen horse. The horse raised his head and looked up at him. He drew his gun and sent a merciful bullet into its brain and through the spinal column. The cayuse gave a sudden heave and lay back—dead. Then Wilson turned to the Mountie.

"Now," he said, "Jean Laceau has headed north. He will hit the Gap and follow the Red Deer River to Batoche. That's where he's headed for. I'm going to follow him north, and you take care of this Indian; he's arrested for horse stealing. Then you ride hard to Macleod and tell them to send word to Fort Calgary to get a patrol to watch the Gap, also the Kananaskis Pass, for the breed when he comes out. So long!" and Wilson swung into his saddle and followed up Laceau's trail.

ABOUT a week after, he rode up through the Sun Dance Canyon. He came down over Sulphur Mountain and struck the Bow River. Past Mt. Rundle and the

Three Sisters, winding in and out along the river, at last he saw where the mountains fell away and the shimmering, snow-covered foothills lay peacefully under a warm March sun. In a few days more the great chinooks would sweep them bare of snow. He was thinking of their beauty just as he entered a thick maze of bush. Then, to his astonished ears, came the quick command to "Halt! In the name of the Queen!"

"Halt yourself and see how you like it," was Wilson's answer.

Then a lithe, well-built, muscular figure stepped into view. Wilson gazed, awestruck, for there before him stood a Mounted Police that Wilson could have sworn was himself. "Say!" Wilson cried, in surprised tones, "who are you and where do you hail from?"

Ignoring Wilson's question, the police cried: "Hullo, Wilson! Did you get him?" It was Pete!

Wilson sprang from the saddle and shook hands with him. He ignored the question and asked: "How's the leg, and what on earth are you doing here?"

"The leg?" Pete exclaimed, "Oh! It got well quick. After I left the hospital I joined the Police. You see, Reil has started trouble!"

"Reil!" Wilson cried, "started trouble?"

"Yes," Pete answered. "A party of police, about twenty-four, I think, were repulsed by the half-breeds at Duck Lake. They're plundering now all over the North Country. The police are mad and wild to get revenge. To think that those breeds would turn on a party of men in the Queen's uniform and beat 'em at that. Say, it makes my blood boil! I heard yesterday that the Indians under Big Bear have massacred the settlers around Frog Lake. General Middleton has

arrived from the East and has gone to their aid. He has a large force of volunteers with him, and they're going to drive into Batoche. We haven't any news from them yet. Commissioner Irvine has left Regina with a force of Mounted Police, and Indian runners are busy between the reserves, carrying the news. We've got to get Jean and they sent out a large force to watch the passes all along the mountains, but I guess he's escaped, so we better hurry up and get back to Calgary. I'll go round up the other pickets and we'll join you down the river."

So SAYING, Pete secured his horse and rode off, leaving Wilson to wonder at all he had been told. Pete himself had joined the Royal Mounted. Now he looked the exact image of Wilson. The breed had escaped and Riel had started the rebellion. Things sure had changed since he had left the foothills to wander through the mountains. He could barely realize that what Pete told him was true.

A short while after Pete and three Canadian militiamen joined him.

"Well, Wilson," Pete exclaimed, "you don't look like your old self. Those days up in the mountains sure have played havoc with you. You look like a different man!"

"No, Pete!" Wilson answered, "I haven't changed. I've been riding pretty hard for the last week. Just as soon as I get a couple of days' rest I'll be back to my old self."

"Rest!" Pete cried. "You'll be lucky if you get time to eat, let alone rest!"

"Yes," Wilson answered, "I guess I will. Tell me all about what has happened since I left."

"Well," Pete began, "a herd of half-breeds stampeded up at Duck Lake and the Mounted Police started out to round 'em up. They met on the fifteenth of March on an open trail near Duck Lake. The police tried to reason with them and the breeds started to throw insults, and before they knew it the opposing forces locked horns and went to it. The breeds just about cleaned up the police and now the police are raging around like a herd of wild bulls. They want to dive in and clean the breeds up in quick fashion, but the officers are holding 'em back.

"Then old Big Bear went out and massacred very near all the white settlers at Frog Lake. General Middleton has left Qu'Appelle and has gone toward Batoche. We are now waiting for news. I haven't seen or heard much for a couple of days."

Late that afternoon the little company of two police and three militiamen entered Calgary. That little old cow town was alive with excited people. Pete and Wilson rode up to the Barracks to report and there they got the latest news.



CHAPTER IX



LIEUTENANT COLONEL OTTER and his force of Canadian militia had hastened on to the relief of Battleford. He had repulsed the Indians and had stayed there to protect the lives of six hundred women and children that had sought refuge within the village of Battleford.

Middleton had been attacked at Fish Creek, but the rebels under Dumont had withdrawn in the night. The Western Indians were breaking loose and had started to drive cattle to make "pemican." If they donned their war paint and dug up the hatchet the white settlers would be forced to withdraw to the east, but fortunately old Crowfoot was undecided. He sat back and waited and the other chiefs did likewise. And while they waited, the cry of the blood that had been spilled on the snow at Duck Lake clamored through the whole of Canada and everywhere the cry of revenge arose.

Regiments from Quebec, Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg had begun to arrive on the scene of discontent. Then the Winnipeg Field Battery set out to give the rebels a taste of the big guns.

Wilson stepped out on the porch of the Police Barracks and looked at the changed aspect of the little old town of Calgary. He walked down to the one hotel. It was a one-story building, not large enough to accommodate all the travelers. He pulled a chair into the

shade of the veranda and sat down.

A cowpuncher walked up to him and inquired the latest news. Wilson looked up and replied, "Well, partner, I don't know. I've just come in from the mountains and I am waiting for orders. I'm giving my horse a rest and then I'm going to get into the game. What's that fellow putting up over there?"

"That's a bulletin board," replied the puncher. "We're going to be kept posted on the news from now on."

Soon a mob of cowboys, ranchers, farmers and civilians were gathered around the board. Everywhere was excitement and action. It seemed as if the town had gone wild.

Then a red-coated figure came galloping down the street on a big bay horse. At the stirrup was tied an Indian. The police had securely tied him to both stirrup and saddle horn and was now headed for the Barracks.

Wilson leaped to his feet and dashed down the street. It was Corporal Winning of Gleichen. Wilson mounted the steps and opened the door of the Barracks, only to run smack into the corporal.

"Hullo, Corporal," he cried. "Any news?"

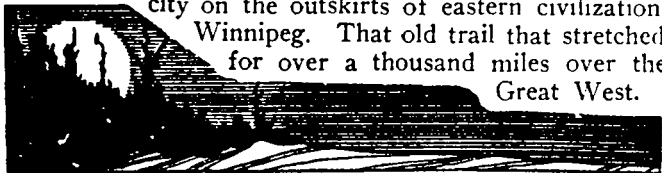
"Yes," answered the corporal, "I've just brought in an Indian runner. He claims that the Sioux are going to put two thousand fighting men on the warpath to help the Western Canadian Indians!"

Wilson backed up against the door jam. His face turned white. Two thousand Sioux! It seemed impossible. Hadn't the Sioux had enough of fighting with the United States troops? They were going to cross the line and fight in Canada. It seemed impossible.

Two days later he set out with a large company of volunteers under General Strange, to hasten to the relief of Edmonton, which was threatened with rebel Cree and Salteaux Indians. The police could not hold out long, and if Edmonton fell, nothing would keep the Blackfeet, Piegans, Bloods, Sarcees and Stonies down. After a quick, strenuous march they arrived in Edmonton in safety. Then Wilson was called upon to take a message through from Edmonton to Battleford for Lieutenant-Colonel Otter, a distance of two hundred miles.

It was night. The full moon was just rising as indicated by the red glow at the northeastern horizon. The seemingly cold stars shone down upon him and a light breeze blew through the budding branches of poplar and cottonwood, and borne upon the breeze came the cry of the hungry wolves from the north. But Wilson was blind and deaf to all that Nature spread before him. His whole mind was set on his distant destination.

He was on the old Pioneer's Trail, the trail that both Indian and white man had used ever since the white man had forced his way into the western Canadian wilderness. That old trail of both barter and war that wound round great bogs and marsh, through dense undergrowth, by the mighty Saskatchewan River, then away from it, across little streams, and over hills and plains, past Battleford, over the South Saskatchewan, through the Touchwood Hills, and at last into that old city on the outskirts of eastern civilization, Winnipeg. That old trail that stretched for over a thousand miles over the Great West.



Suddenly a dark figure crossed his trail. He urged his horse to a gallop. Starlight's white tail streamed out like a comet. Then an Indian sprang from the bush and caught the horse by the bridle. Wilson's .45 flashed under the slowly rising moon. There was a tongue of red flame, a deafening report, and the Indian fell dead. This was war. He must get the message through at all costs, so he stopped for nothing. But the attack was not over, for scarce had the report died away when five yelling, bloodthirsty Crees burst from the bushes. Wilson saw one ahead with a rifle, but no sooner had Wilson seen than the rifle spoke. The bullet burned an ugly gash along Starlight's side. As the mighty stallion charged the Indian, a second shot rang out and Wilson felt a burn through his left arm. Again his revolver spoke and the Indian crumpled up in a lifeless heap.

Wilson did not pause to see what he had done, for two Indians were at his horse's head. Then one wrenched his foot free from the stirrup. Regardless of his paining arm he dropped the lines and pulled his other gun. Two more Indians joined their fallen comrades. Then a knife sailed through the air and buried itself to the hilt in the pommel of Wilson's saddle. The Indian never threw another. The sixth Indian had gained the rifle and Wilson fired just as the rifle spoke. The Indian fell backwards into the bush and crawled away with a bullet-hole through his shoulder to tell his rebel friends. The last bullet had burned a gash across Wilson's shoulder, but paying no attention to his wounds he rode on.

The stars and moon grew pale; close down along the eastern horizon a light pink glow appeared. A few fleecy black clouds, high above the horizon, turned a dull red. The pink turned to a light purple and from

purple to bright vermilion. Then the vermilion faded into a golden yellow and the sun burst upon the world in all its splendors of an early spring morning.

A stray bird warbled, then another. A gopher whistled from its little mound at the mouth of its hole. Then suddenly, as if awakened by the warm sunlight, the whole world of nature burst into song. With the coming of dawn and the singing of thousands of Nature's feathered creatures, Wilson seemed to stir into life. He checked the steady trot of his big steed, and, throwing the saddle upon the ground, he let him have an hour's rest, while he himself dressed his wounds and partook of a light breakfast.

STARLIGHT's wound was not serious, so Wilson put the saddle on him and rode on. Day turned to night and night to day, and at last he rode into Cut Knife Creek, where, a few days previous, a sharp engagement had taken place between Colonel Otter and Chief Poundmaker. The two big guns that Colonel Otter had with him broke down early in the engagement, and then the superior numbers of the Indians forced him to fall back upon Battleford. His losses were eight dead and fourteen wounded men. The news had spread like a prairie fire before a high wind and the Western Indians were like mad dogs at the end of a leash.

When he rode into Battleford, he found it securely defended by the Canadian militia and police. Seeing to his horse's welfare, he then hurried to Colonel Otter with the message. The Colonel took the message and

read it, then he asked Wilson about his trip. Wilson put his hand in his pocket and drew out six empty shells. "Colonel," he said, "there's five dead and one wounded Indian lying there!"

In surprise the colonel asked, "What happened?"

"Oh!" Wilson replied, "I just had a little encounter on the road!"

After Wilson told his story the colonel sent an order for his officers. When they came in he offered them seats and then said, "Well, boys, Mr. Wilson here has just arrived from Edmonton. He very near lost his life, but you all know that he has a whole herd of guardian angels hovering over him. However, he has brought the news that General Strange has reached Edmonton in safety and is now upon the trail to Battleford with his volunteers. The idea is that Big Bear and his band of Salteaux Indians will be between us and his regiments and he will be hemmed in and forced to surrender. Now we must watch and see that this move doesn't fail."

WILSON had his wounds seen to. They were not serious and, as he wanted to find Lacey, he moved on to Batoche. He expected to run across his man himself and get him alive. He found Middleton awaiting the arrival of the steamer Northcote, coming down the river with reenforcements and supplies. On the fifth day of May the steamer arrived and Middleton advanced.

When they reached their objective, Batoche, they found the ground before the village honeycombed with rifle-pits. For three days they tried to break that line of rifles, but it seemed as if it were impossible. On the fourth day the volunteers got wild. They lost their patience and Middleton knew he couldn't hold them. All morning they lay in concealment and fired into the

village, but when the afternoon came and the line was still unbroken, Middleton rallied his men and, led by Colonel Williams of the Midland Battalion, that revenge-maddened horde drove forward at a run.

The panic-stricken half-breeds fired in vain. That invincible horde pressed in upon them, drove them from the pits and chased them through the village.

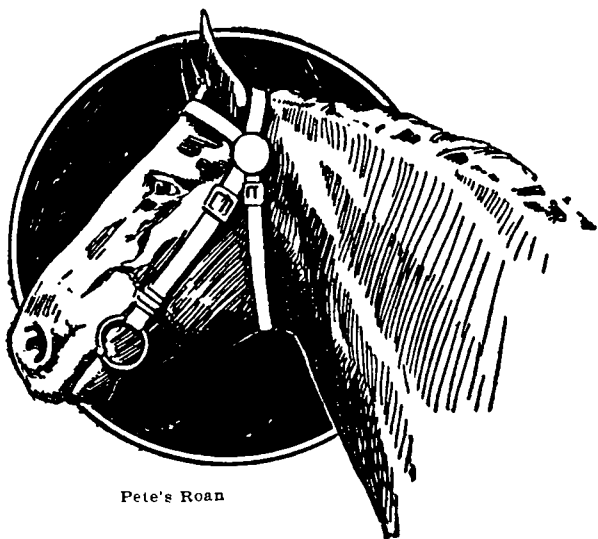
Wilson left Starlight out of danger and charged on foot with the volunteers. Again and again his guns spoke. The Indians fell back on all sides; dead men lined the streets and the victorious volunteers went on, past the village and into the open. When night fell every red man's heart was broken, and three days later Riel was forced to give himself up.

Without loss of time, Middleton pressed on to the relief of Battleford. He joined Colonel Otter and marched out to meet Big Bear. When that worthy found himself hemmed in at Fort Pitt he retreated. Major Steel took up the chase, and a few days later his band was broken up and Big Bear himself was captured.

Then Poundmaker and his Indians came in and laid down their arms. Thus ended the Saskatchewan Rebellion. The Western Indians had sat back and waited. The Sioux had not crossed the border and the Indian's last chance for freedom had passed away.

After the fight with Big Bear, Wilson joined General Strange and returned to Calgary. Great was the rejoicing at the return of those men who had left their all to fight for their country.

Where else can such hardy men be found? Truly no country can raise men like those of North America. Home loving and peaceful, they hunt, trap and farm. Surely there is none like the Canadians and Americans, who, at the cry of danger to their homes, will take up their arms and defend their people. What a race of men and women from which to build a strong and everlasting nation!



Pete's Roan

CHAPTER X.



AS SOON as Wilson arrived in Calgary he set out in search of Pete. He found that worthy calmly smoking in the shade of a tree. At the sight of Wilson, he jumped to his feet. They shook hands and then Pete forced him to tell his adventures. When they were told, Pete exclaimed, "And after all that you never caught him!"

"No, Pete," Wilson replied, "he has gone. Dumont is another fellow we wanted. He got away, too. He was Riel's chief associate, you know. I guess they've crossed the border by now. Here I've had a chance to pot him in self-defense several times and my better nature has made me try to capture him alive. Pete! That fellow holds the future of my life in his hands. If I can find him and capture him, before he dies he will tell me all, but first I must get him! If I hadn't been such a fool that night I first met him I'd have him now where he'd be safe, but I had to go and let him know me. He was so scared of me he just had to get away somehow and he did. Now I guess I'll try to get a job here at Calgary and patrol some piece of territory near here. I suppose you'll go back to the Circle D?"

"Me?" Pete cried. "Nothin' doin'! I'm going to stay with the Police."

"Good for you, Pete!" Wilson cried. "We'll get jobs close together and be pals!"

Next day the Superintendent called Wilson into his presence.

"Well, Wilson," he started, "I hear that you carried out a splendid piece of work between Edmonton and Battleford."

"Not as I know of, sir!" Wilson answered.

"Now, don't fight shy of it," the Superintendent exclaimed. "I've seen your horse and he's got a cut from a rifle bullet along his side. Your saddle has a deep gash in the pommel that was put there by a knife thrown by the hand of an Indian. I also hear that you have a bullet-hole through your left arm, and also a cut from a bullet over your shoulder. Is that not so?"

"Well, yes," Wilson replied, "but that is nothing. My arm is very near well and the cut on my shoulder is healed. They don't bother me and I don't see as I have done anything wonderful—especially seeing that I let Laceau escape. Now he's gone and I've had the chance to kill him before he escaped several times."

"Never mind Laceau," the Superintendent replied; "he'll return one of these days. As it is, you are entitled to wear these stripes. The Force is wild over the way you endured the cold wintry days last winter, and then came right in and joined the volunteers and dived right into the thickest of the fight by going to Batoche in hopes of catching your man. Now Corporal Wilson, I suppose you wish to return East?"

"No sir!" Wilson replied. "I'm going to stay out West. I want you to give me a patrol near Calgary and I want to be near Pete."

"Ah, yes," the Superintendent replied; "Pete is a splendid fellow. He looks so much like you that sometimes I wonder if he is your brother; but of course, that couldn't be."

Wilson's face turned white, but he said nothing, so the Superintendent continued, "Now, we are strengthening the Force and we will soon have plenty of men at our disposal. I shall get you a job of patrolling the Blackfeet Reserve and you may have Pete as your assistant. You may start on your patrol next Monday. Make Gleichen your headquarters. Enforce the law and keep an eye open for Laceau. Somehow, I feel sure he will turn up again. Now I have other duties to attend to, so now you may go and find Pete and tell him my orders."

"Thanks very much for your kindness," Wilson answered. "I don't deserve this recognition, but I guess I've got to take it." Then he saluted and left the room.

He immediately found Pete, and, pointing to his stripes, exclaimed, "Pete! I'm your boss. I want you to go to Ottawa at once and arrest the Parliament."

Pete saluted him and said, "Aye, aye, sir! I shall go at once." Then he dodged a well-aimed kick and they both had a hearty laugh.

Finally Wilson said, "We've got a holiday until Monday. Let's go fishing."

"Right-o!" Pete cried, and they walked down to the river arm in arm to spend the rest of the afternoon fishing.

SUMMER had come. Far away across the foothills the purple haze blurred the horizon. Riding as if upon tireless wings, a big hawk circled out over the valley. A hot sun shone down from a clear sky and seemed to make the short green grass wilt under its scorching rays. The slopes of the hills were covered with golden ladder and pink wild roses. The little bush-rimmed streams trickled and babbled on their way to the river. Here





“BY GEORGE!” PETE EXCLAIMED, “THEY SENT A SIGNAL.”—Page 75.

Drawn from Grissinger's original.

and there a few Indian ponies stood in the shade of the leafy bushes and idled away the long June days. Myriads of insects darted through the air. Gay colored butterflies flitted from flower to flower. The honey bees buzzed on their long journey of toil, storing away food for the winter. A ceaseless drone of grasshoppers filled the air. Then a gopher whistled a warning. Soon the whole hillside was covered with whistling gophers. The big hawk that had circled out over the valley swooped down from his airy home and the whistling ceased. Every gopher had disappeared and the hawk mounted to the sky without his dinner.

Down in the valley Corporal Wilson and his assistant, Pete, rode their horses at a walk. Over their heads a swarm of mosquitoes buzzed. The horses flipped their tails to brush away their tormenters, but the mosquitoes only dodged the tails and lit again. Tirelessly, the horses fought them. Nor was the fight for the horses alone. The mosquitoes lit upon the men and gave them ceaseless torment. But they soon grew accustomed to the stings, and during the day they gave them no heed. At night a huge smoky fire was built of the short sagebrush that covers the Western prairies. The horses stood in the smoke while the men lay under its covering, telling of their adventures and smoking in peace. The angry mosquitoes buzzed just outside of danger, but the men gave them no heed.

And so on, day in and day out, Wilson and his pal rode over their assigned territory. Sleeping under the starry sky, the fury of the elements gave them no fear. They lay fearlessly under the most fearsome thunder and lightning storms. They faced the scorching chinook winds and glorified in calm, sunshiny days.

Enforcing the law wherever they went, the whisky runners' dread, the Indians' salvation, fearless and brave, they soon won the friendship of every Indian on the reserve. Thus, every day, dotting the undulating prairies, Her Majesty's Red-coated Riders of the Plains rode on their never-ending trails, to enforce the law and make it safe for the ever-increasing stream of immigrants that were coming into the West to make their homes.

One day, as they rode on duty, Wilson, who was in the lead, came to the crest of a hill. His quick eye saw an Indian about a mile away on another ridge. Something about the Indian's actions forced Wilson to turn quickly and ride back out of sight. Pete joined him and they dismounted. Leaving their horses, they crawled to the crest of the hill and, bringing their field-glasses into use, watched the Indian.

HE WAS apparently scouting the hills to see if any danger was near. Fortunately, he had not seen Wilson; so, after making a long, steady survey of the country, he turned and waved his hand to someone below him



on the other side of the hill. Another horseman joined him and the Indian pointed down into the valley. Then with a sweep of his hand, he pointed to the west.

Turning their glasses in the direction indicated by the Indian, they descried a trail leading far into the foothills. Then one of the riders dismounted and kneeled upon the

ground.

Their every act denoted caution, and they didn't loose any time in doing what they intended to, whatever that was going to be. The fact that they were doing something illegal was plainly shown by their actions. The newcomer was not an Indian and no white man would be taking such caution in the presence of an Indian if his trade was not that of dodging the law.

Then Wilson gave an exclamation of surprise. "Pete!" he cried, "do you know that fellow upon the ground?"

"He looks familiar, Wilson," Pete answered. "I've seen him upon the reserve when I was a little fellow, but I can't place him. Something about his movements looks familiar though. Do you know him?"

"Watch him," Wilson replied. "He's going to make a fire. See, he uses his left hand. Notice the right hand is bound with cloth. You can't see his face, but if you don't know that fellow, I'm not your friend!"

"Laceau! As I live, by George!" exclaimed Pete. "What on earth is he doing over there?"

"We'll just watch and see," Wilson replied.

The Indian watched the surrounding hills while Laceau piled up three little piles of grass. Then he set fire to them. Three little curls of smoke rose into the air. No breeze was blowing so the smoke went straight up. Then they burnt down and the breed stamped the ashes out. Then both he and the Indian lay down as if in wait for something. Every once in a while, one would rise and look towards the west.

"By George!" Pete exclaimed, "they sent a signal and now they're waiting. Something's going to happen down there."

"You're right, Pete," Wilson replied. "I only wish

I was in reach of that fellow. I'd sure put him where he wouldn't send out another signal!"

"Look!" Pete exclaimed. "See that coming down the trail?"

WILSON turned his glasses as indicated. Down the trail from the west three pack-horses were seen making their way. Two men were handling them and their approach was faster than the ordinary pack-horse.

Wilson turned a knowing glance to Pete and exclaimed, "Pete! Those are whisky-runners. Jean's back on the job. We've got to get him this time or die in the attempt. What plan do you think we should adopt?"

"I don't know," Pete replied. "You know better than I do."

"You know the lay of the land better than I do, Pete. Where do you think they are going?"

"Wait a few minutes and I'll tell you."

The little company of horses and men passed them about half a mile away, down in the bottom of the valley.

"Say, Pete!" Wilson exclaimed, "see that fellow in the lead?"

"Yes."

"That's the fellow I arrested down in Medicine Hat last fall. He got six months in the cooler, but it hasn't done him any good. I'll give him another six months before long!"

"Is that so!" Pete exclaimed. "I know that old rascal quite well. He beat me with a horse-whip one night because I broke a bottle of whisky for him. Wilson, will you let me arrest him. I want to remind him of it."

"You bet I will, Pete!" Wilson answered. "He

pulled his gun on me that time I pinched him, but I was a little too fast for him. Jean took a cold bath that morning, too."

"Ha-ha!" Pete laughed. "I'd like to have been there."

"Good job you wasn't!" Wilson answered. "I broke five hundred cases of whisky not a hundred yards from where I arrested him, only the night before. You'd have been so drunk you wouldn't have been able to stand!"

"Yuh big lumox!" Pete cried. "I've a notion to——By George, look!"

"Yes, sir," Wilson answered. Then the joke was forgotten as he turned his glasses on the men below.

"They've taken the trail to Crowfoot's camp!" Pete exclaimed. "There goes Jean now! They're going to see if it's all right on the next hill. The pack-horses will wait down there for the next signal. Cautious devils, aren't they?"

"Pete!" Wilson answered. "They've been doing that for the last month. I've often seen those smokes rising, but I've never paid any attention to them. We're just about beat. We can't approach them no way. To expose ourselves would be certain death."

"Come on, Wilson," Pete answered, "I've got a plan. No time to lose, so hurry!"

PETE RETURNED to his horse and Wilson followed. They mounted and Pete set out at a hard gallop down the hillside. When he reached the bottom, he turned southeast and Wilson saw that he was going to head them off. When they were well on their way, Pete turned to Wilson and said, "There's a big clump of

willow bushes about a mile from Crowfoot's camp. The whole party will come in there and wait while the Indian rides into camp to see if it's safe. We'll beat them to it and arrest them when they get there. 'It's about five miles from here.'

It was late in the afternoon when they arrived at the hill they had to cross to get into the clump of willows. Pete dismounted and crawled to the top of the hill to see if they were in sight. About two miles away he saw the two little signal fires arise. Only one hill separated them. He turned and waved to Wilson to come on. Wilson led Pete's horse to the crest of the hill. Pete mounted and they tore down the slope at a fierce gallop.

Hiding their horses amongst the willows where they wouldn't whinny when the pack-horses arrived, they lay down and waited. Soon the signal arose from the hill nearest them and then the pack-horses swung into sight. Without a word they waited. As they drew near, Wilson saw Jean and the Indian mount their horses and ride towards them. A little rise separated them from view before they came into sight; the pack horses burst into the clump of willows.

"Cover your man now, Pete!" Wilson whispered. "Now rise!"

They sprang from their places of concealment and the whisky-runners found themselves looking down the ugly muzzles of the police's guns.

"Not a sound from either of you now or out you go!" Wilson said in a clear but low voice. "Behave

yourselves and it'll be the better for you. Here, step up and take what's coming to you. Watch that fellow, Pete! He's a dangerous character."

Wilson's eyes flashed fire as he spoke, and neither man moved. With very little ceremony the handcuffs were put on them and Wilson thrust a gag in his man's mouth. Pete reached up and stripped a willow branch of its leaves and thrust the bitter leaves into the mouth of his captive.

"Hold on, Pete! No dirty work now!" Wilson cried.

"Aw shucks, Wilson, this is only a reminder of the time he horse-whipped me!" Then to his captive, "Tastes good, doesn't it?"

Pete's captive was in a rage of fury, but he couldn't speak for his gag. Pete poked him in the ribs with his revolver and with a grin on his face he commanded him to lie down.

No sooner had they lain down than the Indian, who was with Laceau, swung out into the trail and started at a lazy trot towards them. He rode up to the bushes and dismounted. Wilson stepped from his place of concealment and, covering the Indian, exclaimed, "I arrest you in the name of the Queen!"

Pete joined him and the Indian surrendered without resistance. It was the one who had escaped in the mountains after Wilson had knocked him senseless. He recognized Wilson immediately.

"Where's Laceau gone?" Wilson looked him straight

in the face.

"Huh! No un'stan' English!" grunted the Indian.

Wilson stepped up to him and, pointing to the hill, said, "Two horse." He held up two fingers and pointed to the horses; then, holding up one finger, said, "One horse come, see? Where's the other horse?"

"Huh, Blood Reserve!" grunted the Indian.

"That's a lie!" Wilson cried. "He went to the Blackfeet Reserve!"

Then Pete, having mastered the Indian tongue, stepped up and fired question after question at the Indian. Then, turning to Wilson, he said, "He says that Laceau left this outfit in the hands of Old Whiskers there and is gone to take a supply into the Blood Reserve."

"I don't believe it!" Wilson cried. "He's gone to the Blackfeet Reserve! You take care of this outfit and I'll go find him. If he isn't there I'll come back and follow him from here to the Blood Reserve. You know what to do if I don't return. If I go to the Blood Reserve I won't be back for several days. Good-bye!"

So saying, he sprang into the saddle and headed for the Blackfeet Reserve, while Pete turned and took his captives to Gleichen to await their trial.



CHAPTER XI.



WILSON rode up to the Blackfeet encampment and without a pause headed straight for old Crowfoot's teepee. Crowfoot, who was sitting in the doorway, looked up at his approach. Wilson rode up to him and without greeting, came straight to the point.

"Crowfoot, why have you allowed whisky-runners to come to your Indians and sell them whisky?"

Crowfoot had never been addressed by Wilson like that before. The old chieftain knew he was cross about something, so without a word he rose to his feet.

"I no let my Indians buy whisky."

"Crowfoot, I've just arrested one of your Indians who was helping three whisky runners to come to your camp. The same Indian tried to steal my horse last winter. What have you got to say about that?"

A look of surprise and humiliation spread across the chief's face.

"Crowfoot!" Wilson continued, "it's a dirty shame that a big chief like you would allow your Indians to buy whisky. You say you are the white man's friend. Bah! You are no friend. Is it a friend who smiles in your face and then when your back is turned, he laughs at your back. Is it a friend who sympathizes with you when your enemy escapes and when you leave he invites your enemies to a feast to laugh at you? Crowfoot, you are two-faced!"

Crowfoot drew himself up to his full height. Never before had he received such an insult from a white man.

"Why does my white brother come and tell me this?" he asked. "My white brother is crazy. Crowfoot has seen his Indians drunk. He has tried to find the whisky runner, be he cannot. He has watched many times. He has told the Indians not to buy, but the Indian is like my white brother. They do not obey their chief. Why do the white men sell the Indian the whisky? They do not obey the Great White Mother! They do not come into my camp. They stay away. My Indian comes and tells them where the whisky is, then they go and buy. Crowfoot never sees until the runner is far away."

WILSON saw that he had spoken too quickly, but he wasn't prepared to give in.

"Listen, Crowfoot," he said, "Today I arrested two whisky runners and one of your Indians. He was helping them into your reserve. One got away, but I shall get him yet. The one that got away came to your encampment right here. He is here this very minute, somewhere within this camp. I have come for this man. He is Jean Laceau! Now show me that you are the white man's friend and bring me Jean Laceau. If you don't, I'll take you!"

A look of dismay gave place to the look of haughty pride on the old Indian's face. He knew Laceau was not in the camp. He had thought that he was across the border, but here was Wilson, the man who had never told him a lie, telling him he would take him along to answer for Jean and he knew he would be given a short rest in jail for helping an enemy of the police. He knew that they didn't care whether they arrested a chief or a brave. It was all the same to them.

Without a word, he turned and gave a sharp command. Several young braves came up to him. After a short intercourse, the braves left and soon Wilson saw squaws chased from their teepees; blankets and clothes were thrown out. Not a teepee was left untouched, but after every teepee was sacked not a sign of Jean had been found. Indians had watched every trail and point of vantage to prevent his escape. It was plain that Jean had not come that way.

With a look of triumph, Crowfoot turned to Wilson and cried: "Huh! You see, Jean no come. He has fooled my white brother. You will never get him."

"Yes, Crowfoot," Wilson replied, "he has fooled me, but not for long. I go now to get him. Remember you are the white man's friend. If Jean comes again you must let me know. Remember, you are a great chief. What would the chiefs of the Piegans, Bloods, Stonies and Sarcees say if they knew that Crowfoot, the great chief of the Blackfeet, let his Indians help whisky runners. I must go now." And Wilson held out his hand to bid him good-bye.

Ignoring the hand, Crowfoot turned and walked away. It cut Wilson to the quick, but without a word he turned to his horse, mounted, and left the encampment.

Two days later Wilson's big stallion bore him into the Blood Reserve. Several Indians were lying around the teepees. Several were drunk, and one that had a little more than the others covered Wilson with a rifle. A sober Indian, seeing Wilson's danger, leaped to his feet and snatched the rifle from the Indian's hands.

With a mighty bound Wilson was upon him. He soon had the drunken Indian subdued and handcuffed.

Then he turned to his rescuer and exclaimed: "Good Indian. I shall not soon forget. You saved my life! Then he extended his hand and gave the Indian a hearty handshake.

The Indian smiled and walked away. He had shaken hands with the great red-coated rider of the Blackfeet Reserve. Soon he disappeared amongst a band of braves to brag of it.

Wilson then sought the chief and asked where the Indians got their whisky, but like Crowfoot, he didn't know. They had left the camp and returned drunk. Then Wilson had the chief get the buck that saved his life. He knew as much as the chief, but no more. They seemed surprised to find out that Laceau was back. So, baffled and downhearted, he turned his horse towards the north and rode into Macleod with his captive.

The Superintendent was surprised to see him. He ignored Wilson's salute and shook hands, and at the same time exclaimed: "By George, Wilson, it seems good to see your face again. You look troubled! What's the matter?"

"Well, sir, I've come on very important business."

"You sure must have, or you wouldn't be down in this neck of the woods. Sit down and let's get it over with."

WILSON pulled a chair up to the desk and sat down. Turning to the Superintendent he asked: "Have you been troubled with a whisky runner that you can't catch?"

"Yes, Wilson," the Superintendent replied, "we have."

"Have you ever noticed three little curls of smoke rising from a hilltop on a clear day?"

"Yes, but we have never paid any attention to it. Why?"

"Well, like you, I never paid any attention to it until the other day. I just happened onto it, so I thought I'd better watch.

"I was riding over a hill when I saw an Indian looking over the surrounding country from another hill, about a mile away. Something about that Indian made me turn my horse and ride back out of sight. Pete was with me, but he hadn't reached the crest of the hill yet, so we dismounted and crawled back to the crest to see what the Indian was doing.

"After making sure that no one was around, he turned and waved his hand to some one in the valley on the other side of the hill. The other fellow joined him and they built three little fires. They lasted only a minute, but that was long enough. Soon a little cavalcade of three horses and two men came down the valley and hid in the bushes at the other end to wait for the signal to say when it was safe to advance.

"Pete and I returned to our horses and headed them off by hiding in a clump of willows. We judged that they would all meet there before going into camp, and they did. That is, all except the one that stayed out of sight until the Indian saw if it was safe. This fellow pulled out. I got the other three.

"I have found out that they never enter a camp. The Indian goes in and tells them where to go to get the whisky and they leave camp only to return drunk. The bootleggers take no chances with the Indians or the police. The same thing was done today on the Blood Reserve. That fellow I brought in pulled his gun on me and if it hadn't been for another Indian he

would have killed me. I've brought him in to keep him out of mischief until he sobers up.

"Now, through this, I have found out that there are several little bands with one man at the head. That head man is the fellow I never caught. I've trailed him to the Blood Reserve, but there I could find no more. He has vanished."

THE SUPERINTENDENT listened with great interest. Then he said: "Did you not try to find out who this fellow was? Surely your glasses would have told you."

"Yes," Wilson replied, "I know the fellow well; in fact, a little too well."

"And who is it?"

"Jean Laceau!"

The Superintendent leaped to his feet. "Laceau! Is he back?"

"Yes, sir, he's back. The fact is, he never left!"

"The villain! Wilson, can Pete handle your job?"

"Yes."

"All right; I want you to take up the chase and follow Laceau."

"No," Wilson replied, "I don't think that would be wise. He thinks that we don't know he's here. If we pursue he might run away. Let every man watch for him and when he turns up, just slip in and get him."

"By George, Wilson, that's a fine plan. But I thought you wanted him alive?"

"Yes, I want him alive, but I have given up hope. I must serve the Queen. Take him, dead or alive; it makes no difference to me now. I guess I'll stay out West now, anyway!"

"All right, Wilson, but remember, I'm trusting to

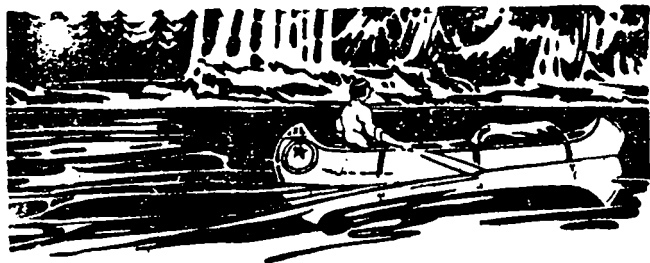
you to get him. I'm glad you've found this out."

Wilson arose. "Thanks very much," he said. "I must be going now. There's no time to lose."

He shook hands with his superior and left. Afterward, he remarked to himself, "that Superintendent's the the best fellow I ever met. You don't have to salute him. He'd rather shake hands."

Three days after he rode into Gleichen. Pete wasn't around, so he questioned several people and they told him that Pete hadn't been in town for two days. Wilson rode down to the reserve, but Pete hadn't been seen there. Then, giving Pete no heed, he went on with his duty. Pete would surely turn up. A fellow like Pete wouldn't be lying around when there was work to do.

A week passed by, but no Pete turned up. Then Wilson got nervous. Without waiting any longer he sent a message to the Superintendent at Calgary, stating that Pete had either left or was somewhere where he couldn't get away, and he wanted another man to take his place. The new man arrived and they both set out in search of Pete.



CHAPTER XII.



YOU SAY you left Pete here while you followed Jean to the Blood Reserve?" questioned the new man.

"Yes; I was gone six days. When I returned Pete was gone. Now I don't think Pete would desert. No! I've got faith in Pete. Somebody has kidnaped him or his horse has fallen and he's hurt or killed. Now, I'm going to enter every lodge on the Blackfeet Reserve and every cave along the banks of the Bow River and I'm going to find him. I've got an idea that Lacey's got something to do with this."

"Well, Corporal," answered the new man, "I'm with you to find him. You know the ropes, so give me your orders and I'll follow."

They were just entering Crowfoot's camp. It was early morning and gophers whistled from every mound. The sun, just an hour high, sent its warm rays down on the little party of two. The Indian encampment was just stirring into life. Great kettles of stew that didn't look very appetizing to the police, swung over roaring fires. Squaws were busy tending the fires, while the braves lay on the ground and idled away their time.

Upon this scene suddenly burst Wilson and his assistant. Wilson nodded and smiled at the lazy braves and at one kettle he stopped and talked with the squaws. He seemed unconcerned and acted as if he had all the time in the world to spare.

He finally ended up at old Crowfoot's tepee. Crowfoot's wife attended a big kettle of stew while Crowfoot sat on the ground polishing his rifle.

"Good morning, Crowfoot," was Wilson's greeting. "Fine morning, eh?"

"Huh," Crowfoot grunted in reply.

Wilson reached into his pocket and pulled out a big pouch of tobacco.

"Here, Crowfoot," he said, "have a smoke."

Crowfoot laid his rifle aside and took the proffered pouch. He calmly filled his pipe and handed the pouch back to Wilson, who handed it on to his assistant. Howard, the assistant, filled his pipe and handed Wilson back his pouch. Wilson filled his pipe and they all smoked in silence.

FINALLY Wilson said, "Crowfoot, Pete has gone. I can't find him anywhere. Have you seen him?"

Crowfoot looked surprised. Taking his pipe from his mouth, he said, "Huh, Pete no come now, two week. I no see him dis long time now. Where he gone?"

"I don't know, Crowfoot," Wilson answered. "I think some Indians have tied him up and he can't get away. I have come to search your camp to see if he is here."

"Huh!" Crowfoot answered. "No here; my Indians good. No steal Pete."

"Yes, Crowfoot," Wilson answered, "your Indians are good. You never saw them get whisky. Sometimes they disobey their chief. I don't think Pete is here, but I'm going to look anyway. Tell your braves what I am going to do."

Wilson arose as if to commence. He never noticed

an Indian that had been listening to their talk, arise and walk away. A few minutes after the same Indian could have been seen leaving camp on a little Indian cayuse. It was the Indian that had saved Wilson's life on the Blood Reserve.

All morning they searched. Without stopping for dinner they continued it far into the afternoon. But when the last teepee was searched, Peter was still as far off as ever.

Wilson announced his failure to Crowfoot. That worthy just smiled and answered, "Huh, not on Black-foot Reserve. Maybe find him by river. Up in cave. You go see; maybe find."

Next day the search was continued. They looked into every cave and washout, thicket and draw. Not a place of concealment was passed. Night came and passed and still the search went on. Then they swung off and searched the valleys and ravines. Three days after they returned to Gleichen, baffled.

Wilson was in no mood to talk. His faithful Pete had left him. He was a deserter. His one and only real true friend had turned him down. His whole faith in man left him and he left the barracks to take Starlight from the barn and ride out far across the prairie under the stars. He still had one faithful friend, and that was Starlight. But it was poor comfort to think that he had to turn to an animal to find a friend.

As HE was going down the steps an Indian emerged

from the darkness and stepped up to him. He immediately recognized his friend of the Blood Reserve.

Wilson bade him "Good evening."

The Indian grunted a reply and beckoned Wilson to follow. Wilson hesitated, thinking there might be some treachery, but the Indian drove away all his fears when he said, in broken English, "Me Pete brodder. Come, I show you. Me you friend. Come."

The Indian led him out of hearing distance of the barracks. Then he stopped, turned to Wilson and said, "T'ree day you come Blackfeet camp. You tell Crowfoot Pete gone. Say maybe Indian tie up. You dunno, maybe. I hear you tell Crowfoot. Den me go hunt Pete myself.

"Long tam go Jean come. Bring little white papoose to my modder. Jean say, 'No let white man see.' My modder keep white papoose. Den me eight-year-old, me. All Indian call white papoose 'White Face.' My modder keep White Face and now White Face my brodder.

"Four year 'go Indian get big drunk. Go crazee. Big fight. Big Indian crazee, go keel me, big knife. White Face fight. Take knife 'way. Take whiskey bottle, knock Indian in head, mak heem sleep. White Face save my life. He my brodder—I no forget. Den White Face tell me he go leave. Go work on beeg ranch. Den you come. You look like White Face. You White Face friend. White face save my life. I no forget. Odder day I save you life. You White Face friend;

White face my brodder.

"Two week 'go Laceau catch White Face 'gain. Go take heem far. You no can find. Maybe one, two day. I come tell you go catch White Face queek. Bring nodder police, den follow me now."

With surprise, fear, delight and dismay, Wilson listened to the Indian's story. The Indian moved off to his horse. Wilson caught him and cried: "Hold on, let me see if I get you."

The Indian stopped and Wilson said: "You say that Laceau brought Pete to your mother when you were eight years old. Then he became your brother. Four years ago Pete saved your life and now you want to help me get Pete back. We've got to act quick or inside of a couple of days Pete will be taken far away. Now, tell me where Pete is, quick!"

THE INDIAN showed delight at what Wilson said, then he answered: "T'ree mile west, den one mile south, in beeg place, lots hill, both sides, little river in bottom over beeg ranch. What you call heem?"

"The Circle D," Wilson replied.

The Indian grunted his approval and Wilson scratched his head. Then, with a cry of delight, he exclaimed: "By George! How did I forget it? He's up in the cave in Snake Ravine, southwest of the Circle D."

He turned and rushed into the barracks. Howard was just crawling into bed. Wilson grabbed the blankets and heaved them across the room. Howard jumped out

to regain them, and, in doing so, he kicked a chair over. With a loud yell he grabbed his big toe to ease the pain.

"Get into your jeans, man," Wilson cried. "This ain't no time to be countin' yer toes. Get into your jeans and saddle your horse. Pete's over in Snake Ravine and they're takin' him away. There's no time to lose."

When Howard heard the news he forgot his sore toe and dived into his clothes. Wilson strapped on a cartridge belt and broke his .45s to see if both chambers were loaded. Then he grabbed a Winchester from the rack on the wall and dived through the door. When Howard joined him he found both horses ready. The Indian joined them and they swung into the saddles. The horses seemed to enter into the spirit of the game and clattered away into the darkness.



CHAPTER XIII.



LONG before the sun rose the two police and the Indian headed their horses into Snake Ravine. Along the creek a heavy growth of willow and alder helped to hide them. They rode up along the creek for a mile or more and then the Indian halted. Turning to Howard he said: "You stay here. Hide in bush all day. Watch; no let Laceau go past. Ma'be he come today. He go tak Pete away far. Ma'be today. I go tak nodder police far down creek. Stay all day, see? Ma'be go nodder way. Me come tonight when beeg star come over hill, in East. Den we all go get Pete up in cave, you un'stand. No go now, too late. Sun coming up now. Catch tonight when beeg star come over hill."

Howard, scenting some treachery, turned to Wilson. "What about it, Corporal? Is it all right?"

"Yes, Howard," Wilson replied, "do as he tells you. Good-bye and good luck!"

Then the Indian turned and led Wilson back over the hill. Just before dawn broke they galloped down over the hill, three miles below Howard, and hid in the bushes near the trail along the creek.

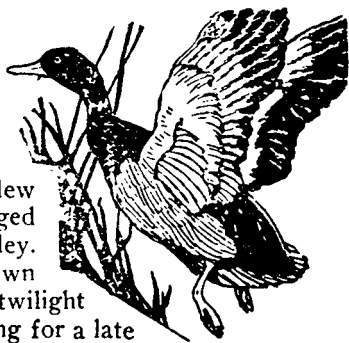
The sun rose over the eastern hills. A bird flitted through the willows and lit above Howard's head. It

looked down at him and peeped a saucy "Good morning." Then a gopher ran by. Seeing Howard it sat upon its hind legs and whistled at him. Howard moved and the gopher immediately got down on all fours and scurried away through the bush.

THE SUN grew hotter. Then the mosquitoes found him. He fought them off and went on watching. A big hawk circled out over the valley, and, seeing a gopher, dived down not ten feet from him, caught the gopher and lit. Howard watched him tear it into fragments and eat. Then, after rubbing his hooked beak on the ground to clean it, he looked around, spread his wings and flew off. He watched little insects crawl through the grass and willow roots. Although Nature stood out in all her splendors on every side, the police soon grew tired and fell into a deep sleep.

At last the sun swung into the western part of the sky. Howard awoke with a start and gazed around him; then remembering where he was he cursed himself for sleeping on duty. After satisfying himself that no one had passed he lay down and watched.

Along the hillside, to the west, a herd of antelope came to graze. Then an old mother duck led her flock of fluffy children down to the creek and a huge greenhead mallard flew out of the reeds and winged its way off over the valley. Then the sun swung down over the western hills and twilight came. A weasel, out looking for a late



supper, poked its nose into Howard's hiding place. It hissed at him and stared with its cruel little black eyes, then turned and looked elsewhere for food. Then darkness came. A bat flitted overhead in the murky gloom, catching the nats and mosquitoes that frequented the higher atmosphere. An owl, true to its nocturnal nature, hooted a greeting that sounded uncanny in the stillness. It was just after midnight when the glowing rays of the planet Venus flung their bright light down into Howard's hiding place. A step sounded close to his ear and the Indian stood beside him.

"Mak no noise," the Indian cautioned. "Come, no go today. Jean gone long tam, come back soon; hurry, no lose tam. I hear Indian in cave say Jean come to-night. He come tonight we have big fight, ma'be kill White Face. He no come tonight, White Face all right. We catch heem easy from Indian that watch."

"Where's Wilson?" Howard asked.

"He come down nodder way. We must go now."

THROWING the saddle on his horse, Howard mounted and the Indian led him down the creek. They had gone about a mile when two shots rang out from the hillside to the west. The Indian stopped and listened; then five more shots rang out in rapid succession. All was still for a minute. Then a loud, shrill, piercing scream echoed and re-echoed through the ravine. Then all was silence.

The Indian turned to Howard. The moon lighted up his puzzled face. Then he knelt down and placed

his ear to the ground. Satisfying himself that he could hear nothing, he rose and said, "What you t'ink dat?"

"I don't know," Howard replied. "That first shot was a .45 caliber; all the rest were .50. I believe that first shot was Wilson's."

"Huh!" the Indian exclaimed, "Wilson shoot one tam. Dat scream belong Laceau. Odder shot, I dunno. Come queek! Mabee tak Pete."

They went at a light, quick canter for about half a mile, then the Indian slid from his saddle and motioned Howard to follow. Leaving their horses tied amongst the willows, they proceeded on foot.

Soon the Indian turned to Howard and said: "Come here; you stay dis side. I go nodder side. You crawl easy to cave. Two Indian watch. One in bush on dis side, nodder inside cave on nodder side. I crawl nodder side; you crawl dis side. I go war whoop, scare Indian. Den you hit heem on head with rifle, mak heem go sleep, no shoot."

So saying the Indian faded into the night. Howard crawled up close and lay down. Then he wondered why Wilson hadn't joined him. Those mysterious shots over on the hillside. This mysterious Indian. He didn't know whether to proceed or not. Just then an Indian crawled not two yards in front of him. A big knife glistened at his belt and a rifle was in his hand, but it wasn't the Indian that had just left him.

Suddenly one of the most sickening, weird yells came from the other side of the cave. The Indian in

front of Howard sprang to his feet and Howard's rifle-butt crashed against his head and the Indian sank to the ground, senseless.

HOWARD stepped forward and found himself under a yawning gap in the hillside. At the far side of the gap another Indian lay senseless. Then his Indian joined him and they put the handcuffs on the two and tied their legs with rope found just inside the cave. Leaving them as they fell, the police and his companion entered the cave.

They found Pete lying on some old blankets. He was in a high fever and upon examination they found him to be wounded in the side. A big bruise on the side of his head showed where he had been knocked senseless before his capture.

"Huh!" the Indian exclaimed, "Him ver' seek man. Calgary twent' mile. Want doctor queek. I go fetch!"

"Hold on!" Howard cried. "Go over to the Circle D Ranch and get a buggy. Come back quick and we'll drive him into town."

"Him no let Indian have wagon," the Indian protested. "No believe him."

Howard ripped a notebook from his pocket and made out an order for the rig. He signed it: "Corporal William Wilson, R. N. W. M. P., in the name of the Queen."

We will now follow Wilson.

He lay all day in the willows below Howard, while

the Indian went to scout around the cave. At night the Indian returned and told Wilson to ride down over the hill and leave his horse out of hearing, then crawl down and help Howard when he gave the war whoop.

Wilson was riding around the base of a cut bank when he ran smack into Laceau. Wilson saw the flash of Jean's gun and he knew the time had come. Wilson dodged low in the saddle and fired from the hip. Then Jean's gun spoke and both men fell from their saddles. It seemed as if both reports had sounded as one.

Wilson tried to rise but a sharp pain shot through his shoulder. Then, mustering his courage, he rolled over and dragged himself towards the half-breed.

Laceau turned over on his back and cried, "De police, dey got me! Dey got me! Oh, de devil! Tak heem 'way. I'm dying; help, help!"

WILSON reached over and grabbed him by the shoulder and tried to shake him, but his own pain forced him to let go.

"Where's the baby?" Wilson cried. "Quick, tell me! Where's the baby you stole from the cradle? Tell me, quick!"

"Der he is!" Jean cried. "Der he is—oh, tak heem 'way. Oh! He's in de cave. It's Pete! Pete is de baby. Oh! Pete is de devil. Tak heem 'way!"

Then a great joy swept over Wilson. With a sigh of relief he fell back and lay postrate on the ground.

With a haggard, frenzied face, the half-breed

struggled to a sitting posture. He reached for his gun and fired the five remaining shots at the supposed devil that was after him and then he threw the gun at him. Then, with a sickening scream, he fell back. Wilson's bullet had gone home. A Greater Power had dealt justice.



CHAPTER XIV.



INDY of the Circle D stirred in his blankets. He opened his mouth and yawned. A cold stone dropped into his mouth, and he leaped to his feet. His pal, Richie, was saddling his horse.

"Yuh big fish, yuh!" Windy cried. "Yuh jist get down on yer knees and apologize."

"What for?" asked Richie.

"What fer?" Windy yelled. "Yuh big cheese, what fer? Yas, yuh look a heap innocent. Stones don't drop from the skies!"

"Stones?" Richie laughed. "I don't see no stones."

"Richie!" Windy cried, "if yuh wasn't my pal I'd make yuh eat that stone! Yas, yuh—say, what's those hosses doin' over there?"

"Where?" Richie asked, looking in the direction indicated by the excited Windy.

"Over there below the cliff above the cave. Let me get my glasses."

Windy got his glasses and trained them on the two horses.

"Jumpin' jack rabbits!" he cried. "There's Corporal Wilson's horse and he's standin' over a Mountie. I'll bet it's Wilson! There's another feller lyin' on the ground, too. His hoss is feedin' down the slope. They both got saddles on. Richie! Gordon said he'd fire me

if I ever had a chance to help Wilson and didn't do it. Ne' mind the cattle. They'll graze here until we come back. Come on!"

Windy mounted his horse and started at a gallop down the hillside. Richie followed. They had been sleeping all night under the stars so that they could be on hand to drive their herd of cattle into the Calgary market as soon as daylight came.

They splashed through the creek and up the far slope. Windy reached the cliff first. He dismounted and strode up to Wilson. The big stallion watched his every move. Windy stopped and looked into those evil, fiery eyes. Then he stepped up under his nose and knelt over the prostrate Wilson.

"What's the matter?" cried Richie, riding up.

"He's cashed in, Richie; dead as they make 'em."

"Is he cold?" asked the inquisitive Richie.

"No, he's quite warm! But he's a gonner," Windy replied. "What's that over there?"

WINDY walked over and picked up a pocketbook. "I guess this belongs to Wilson," he said. "He must have dropped it when he fell. He got the breed, though. I allus said he would. Hullo! What's this?" And Windy read aloud:

"In case of accident please notify Mrs. William James Wilson, Rocky Ford Farm, Kingston, Ont."

Then he looked up at Richie and asked, "Can you handle the herd?"

"I guess so. Why?"

"Well," Windy replied, "I'm going into town to report this to the police and send a telegram to Mrs.

Wilson, telling her about the accident. You bring the cattle in and I'll meet you this afternoon. There's a Mountie down there now, look! I'll go on in and send the telegram and you go down and tell him to come up here, then chase the herd on in. So long, good luck to yuh!" and Windy, acting on the impulse of the moment, swung into the saddle to report to Mrs. Wilson that her son was dead.

Richie rode down to Howard, who was off a little distance from the cave, getting some water for Pete. Richie rode up and dismounted.

"Good morning," he said. "You don't happen to be lookin' for Wilson, do you?"

"Do you know where he is?" Howard asked.

"Yes," Richie replied; "he's up there around the cliff. I guess the breed done for him. The breed's dead, too." So saying, he swung into the saddle and was off.

A few minutes after, Gordon, of the Circle D drove up with the team and the rig and the Indian. Howard gave them orders to drive up to the cave and get Pete. Then leaving him in their hands he rode up to find Wilson.

When he rode around the cliff he stifled a cry and sprang from his horse. He bent over Wilson and examined him. Then, feeling for his heart beats, he leaped to his feet with a cry. The heart was still beating, but faintly. Howard sprang into the saddle and tore down to the creek at a wild gallop. He filled his hat with water and, returning to Wilson, he applied it to his head.

FOR FULLY five minutes Howard worked over him. At last he was rewarded. Just as Wilson opened his eyes the others drove around the base of the cliff.

"What's the matter here?" Gordon cried, as he

leaped from the rig.

"Go easy, now," Howard replied. "He's faint from the loss of blood, but if you take things easy, he'll come 'round all right."

* * * * *

A month later Pete staggered into Wilson's room. He had just secured admission and he determined to make the most of it. He found Wilson looking out the window, watching Starlight, who was grazing in an adjacent field.

They exchanged greetings and Pete sat down. Just then an Indian passed the window. Wilson rang the bell for his nurse and asked her to bring the Indian in and also send for the Superintendent. Then turning to Pete, he said: "Pete, as soon as the Superintendent comes I'm going to make you the happiest man in the world!"

"What's on your mind now?" Pete asked.

"Just wait; you'll see," Wilson replied.

The Indian came in and stopped the conversation. Wilson motioned him to a seat and they waited for the Superintendent. He soon arrived and Sergeant Winning and Howard followed.

"Hello, Sergeant Wilson!" the Superintendent greeted.

"Sergeant what?" Wilson cried.

The Superintendent laughed. "Yes, Wilson," he said, "we are removing Sergeant Winning from Gleichen. He is taking a post farther north and now we need another sergeant at Gleichen. You're the man I've picked on!"

"Superintendent!" Wilson exclaimed, "I can't thank you enough for this, but I've got a story to tell which

will force you to get another sergeant for Gleichen. Now, I want you all to listen to this story. I think it will prove interesting.

"TWENTY-ONE years ago a half-breed by the name of John Lathrope came to work for my father. One day they got into a fight and dad licked the breed. The breed swore he'd get revenge, and that night my little brother, six months old, disappeared from his cradle. My mother found a note in the cradle, stating that the breed had taken the baby in revenge and that he, John Lathrope, would see that the baby grew up through a life of misery and that he would never know who he was or who his parents were.

"It busted dad up and he took to drinking. Then my mother's life was a misery. As soon as I was old enough I took care of the farm and dad spent the money as fast as I made it.

"Then a man by the name of McDonald gave me Starlight. I wouldn't have gotten him but his mother broke her leg when he was six weeks old. His mother was beautifully snow-white, whiter than the snow, and that's saying something. His father was the finest coal-black stallion in the East. Last spring I overheard my father tell mother he was going to sell my horse. Well, I'd fed him when he was a colt. I was the only one he'd allow to go near him. I was raging mad at dad. Starlight was all I had to claim my own, so I determined not to let him sell the horse. Therefore, I broke him and pulled out. I thought that maybe dad would see his folly and stop drinking. I don't know whether he has or not, because I have never written home. I left a man there to look after the place. He was my best chum and I told him I'd pay him for his trouble when

I came back. So I joined the Mounted Police and ran smack into Jean Laceau, who is none other than John Lathrope!"

"Why didn't you tell that to Bridon at Winnipeg?" the Superintendent asked.

"Because," Wilson replied, "I was too young to join the Force and Bridon would have investigated and found out my age. I want you all to listen to my Indian friend. He is going to tell another story." Then the Indian began:

"Me leetle boy. Eight year old. Long tam 'go Laceau, he come, bring my modder little white papoose. Tell my modder, no let white man see. White papoose stay my modder, den he my brodder. My white brodder save my life. I no forget. I go tell Weelson my white brodder in cave, go tak heem far 'way, no see Weelson 'gain. Pete my white brodder."

"Now," Wilson continued, "when Jean Laceau died that night in Snake Ravine I asked him where the baby was. He was too absorbed in shooting devils to answer at first. He shot five times at the devils and then threw his gun at them. I've never seen a man die as he did. I know now, a Great Power kept him out of our hands until it had the chance to strike. Boys, before Jean died, he cried, 'Pete is the devil *'Pete is the baby!'* After he cried that out, I fell back. Then Jean shot the five shots I've mentioned, screamed, and fell back, dead. A few minutes after everything went dark before my eyes and I knew no more until Howard brought me around."

Pete could wait no longer. He rose and walked over to Wilson.

"Do you mean to tell me you're my brother?" he cried.

"Yes, Pete," Wilson replied. "Your name is James Benjamin Wilson, and I'm your brother!"

Pete sank into Wilson's arms and wept for joy. The others arose and left the room.



CHAPTER XV.



CHINOOK was blowing from the southwest. The muddy streets of Calgary were pouring their muddy water into the Bow River. Everywhere the snow was melting. An old rooster sat on the fence and crowed. Down the street a happy cowpuncher rode his horse through the slippery mud. He was singing a gay cowboy song. Out in the barn Wilson was throwing the saddle on Starlight. In the next stall Pete was saddling his big roan. His Indian brother had returned the horse after finding it on the range. It was spring and the two brothers were going home.

The long winter months had passed away. The two brothers could wait no longer. They were going to leave the West. Forever? *No!* Some day they would return. The West has a lure. The wild, free West will allow no one to leave after he has breathed its atmosphere. Those vast prairies seem to call the one who has left and he cannot refuse to obey. Yes, Wilson was leaving the West, but not forever.

They rode around to the barracks. The Superintendent stepped out onto the porch and they both saluted him; then they shook hands.

"Well, Wilson," the Superintendent said, "I hate to see you go."

"Yes," Wilson replied, "I hate to leave. Something seems to be calling me to stay. I believe I'll return some

day. I can't thank you enough for the kindness I have received from the Force. I'll never forget you. Now I must go. We are going to ride for the fun of the trip and it's going to take us a long time. I wish you and the Force good luck. Good-bye."

Then Pete's Indian brother came around the corner. His face was sad and Wilson knew the great emotion within his breast. He loved Pete and he was afraid he would never see him again. He rode up and said: "Me come weeth you, mabee far Medice Hat. You let me come?"

"We sure will!" Wilson cried.

THEN they mounted their horses and faced the east. The Superintendent stood on the porch and waited till they dropped over the hill and out of sight. Then he exclaimed, "Well, there goes two of my best men!" Then he turned to his work in the office.

The leaves were turning yellow and gold. A light frost fell at night and a cool north breeze blew through the tree-tops. Everywhere was calm and quiet. Wilson's mighty stallion and Pete's big roan trotted down a highway paved with stone. Pete's wondering eyes took in everything.

He had learned to see and remember. What Wilson never saw Pete saw and delighted in. Then the great waters of Lake Ontario burst into view. With a cry of joy, Wilson cried: "There she is, Jim; that's Lake Ontario. We'll be in Kingston tomorrow. We sleep under our own roof tomorrow night. Come on, here we've idled away all spring and summer on this journey. That old nag of yours'll never make it. Look at Starlight, he knows he's going home. If I didn't have to wait for you, I'd be home tonight."

"Aw, shucks," Jim replied, "when my name was Pete and I was yer friend, yuh allus said this was the best horse yuh ever saw, bar that old cayuse you're on. As soon as yuh find out I'm yer brother, yuh start to quarrel. Yeh, you're a fine bird, you are."

"Aw, shut up, Jim; you're just jealous 'cause yer old horse ain't as good as Starlight. Listen! Say, it's two and a half years since I've heard that whistle. That's the steamer Victoria. She's the only steamer on the lake that whistles like that. Hurry up, I want to see her before she goes out of sight!"

"Shucks, Bill," Jim replied, "there might be a dozen that whistle like her now. Where yuh goin'?"

"C'mon," Wilson yelled, "I want to see that steamer!" and he darted away to the shore of the lake, leaving his brother to follow.

Next day the two Mounties rode up through the streets of Kingston. Then somebody yelled, "Here comes Starlight! Look, boys, it's Wilson!"

Then came the answer, "Thought he was dead!"

Somebody else yelled, "I'll be darned! A bad penny always turns up!"

EVERYWHERE friends ran to meet him. Hearty handshakes were given and friends heaped praise after praise upon him. Then Wilson introduced his long-lost brother. A mighty shout went up and everybody gave them both three cheers.

Just then a big dray came around the corner.

Wilson recognized the driver. It was "Chuck" Walters. Wilson left the crowd and rode over to him. Chuck recognized him and when he saw the sergeant's stripes he jumped off the dray, pulled Wilson from the saddle and gave him a bear hug. Then Wilson asked, "How's the farm?"

"Farm!" Chuck echoed. "Say, you wouldn't know the old place now. You see, when your dad heard that you were killed it just knocked him clean off his feet. I don't believe he's taken a drink since. He claims that it's his fault that you are dead, so he repaid me by setting me up in the draying business in town here. I saw him yesterday and he was doing some fall plowing. He's put a veranda on the front of the house and it sure makes a change. It's changed your mother and she's happy as a lark as long as we don't mention your name. That news very near killed her. By the way, they've got a big surprise out there for you."

"What is it?" Wilson asked, eagerly.

"Now, Bill," Chuck answered, "go out and find out for yourself" and Chuck climbed onto the dray.

Wilson called Jim and they mounted their horses and rode out to the farm. The sun was beginning to sink low in the west when the two happy riders rode up to the gate and dismounted.

WILSON walked up to the door and knocked. Just then Starlight sent out a shrill whistle to his mate that had long since forgotten him. Old Mr. Wilson sat

wearily on the plow seat while the six weary horses tramped along, turning over the soil for the next year's crop. At the sound of Starlight's call they raised their heads with a start. Mr. Wilson dropped the lines, yelled "Whoa," to the horses, tumbled from the seat and set out at a great pace over the plowed field.

Mrs. Wilson heard the knock and answered the door. When she saw the red-coated figure before her she shrank back and Wilson knew she didn't know him.

"Is this where Sergeant William Wilson lives?" he asked.

"Yes—no! You mean Corporal Wilson, but he was killed out West, last fall." Just then her eyes rested on Starlight. "Why," she cried, "that's Willie's horse. Have you brought it back?"

"Yes," Wilson replied. "I've brought Willie back, too!" He could hold out no longer. He threw his arms around his astonished mother and kissed her. Then he turned and said, "Jim, meet your mother! Mother, this is your lost son, Jim. I found him out West."

"Oh Willie!" his mother cried, "how happy I am!" And she stepped forward to throw her arms around her lost son, but Wilson held her back.

"Hold on, mother," he said, "Jim isn't used to being kissed. He's like a horse; you'll have to break him in."

Just then Mr. Wilson mounted the steps. "Hullo, Bill!" he cried.

The mother brought out some chairs and they sat

down on the veranda while Wilson told his story. When he was through he turned toward the setting sun.

"Mother," he said, "that sun is setting over a great, vast wilderness. The great, broad prairies of Western Canada, and over those plains rides one of the greatest forces of men the British Empire has ever known, 'The Queen's Royal Northwest Mounted Police,' and their coats match that sunset!

"Those great plains are going to be the granary of the British Empire, and some day the Rocky Mountains will overlook a vast field of civilization. That's God's land out there and it's too bad that He has given those beautiful prairies to the white man. I'd rather see the great herds of wild buffalo and timid antelope than the great black fields of plowing and the weary horses, lying in the fields to rest, after a day of toil. I'd——"

"By George!" Mr. Wilson exclaimed, "that reminds me that I haven't unhooked the horses!"

He arose to go just as the cry of a little baby arose on the still night air.

"What's that?" Wilson asked of his mother.

"That's your little sister, three months old!" she replied.

Wilson stood dumbfounded. Then he thought of what Chuck had told him and with a cry of delight he opened the door and rushed into the house. Jim followed, and the old couple was left alone. "Come on, mother," Mr. Wilson exclaimed, "let's go get the horses."

Just then they heard Wilson's voice from within.

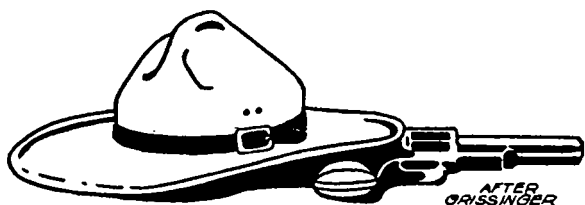
"Let me hold her first!"

"Naw, get out," Pete cried.

"Look out, yer gonna drop 'er!"

"Look out yerself. There, ye've made her cry!"

THE END



AFTER
GRASSINGER

